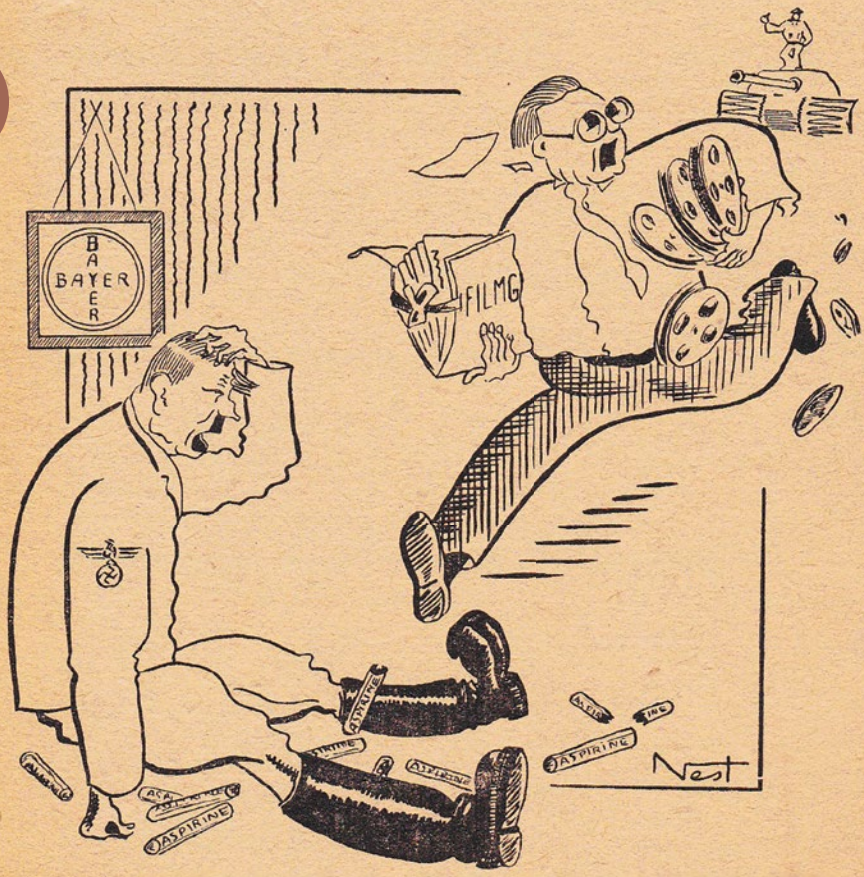

Film Professionals in Nazi-Occupied Europe

Mediation Between the National-Socialist Cultural "New Order" and Local Structures

Edited by
Pavel Skopal · Roel Vande Winkel

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ISBN 978-3-030-61633-5 ISBN 978-3-030-61634-2 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61634-2

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Cover illustration: Cartoon originally published on the cover of the fourth issue of the Belgian "Filmstudiën" journal, in October 1944. (Source: Vande Winkel Collection.)

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG.
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Acknowledgements

The editors would like to thank Kevin Johnson for his excellent language corrections and useful comments on the manuscript.

This work was supported by the Czech Science Foundation (Czech Cinema Culture and the German Occupation: A Research on Cultural Transfers; GA16-13375S).

Thanks to all archives, libraries and institutions that gave permission to reproduce illustrations. A special thanks to William Gillespie.

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CHAPTER 1

Making Decisions: Occupied Film Industries from the Perspective of 'Middle-Men'

Pavel Skopal and Roel Vande Winkel

In the first years of the Second World War, Nazi Germany's military triumphs and the vast territories invaded and occupied by the Wehrmacht allowed German economic players to seize upon the opportunities of the newly 'opened' markets to make a profit and earn much-needed foreign currency. When possible, foreign competitors were eliminated or taken over. This applied particularly to economic sectors which were deemed strategically important for military, political, cultural, or other reasons.[1] The German film industry, which was nationalized between 1936 and 1941 and which was one of the flagships of Joseph Goebbels' Ministry of

Thanks to Tobias Hochscherf for his insightful comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.

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P. Skopal, R. Vande Winkel (eds.), *Film Professionals in Nazi-Occupied Europe*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61634-2_1

Propaganda, was considered to be of high strategic importance and received ample support to dominate substantial parts of the European film market. The German influence was felt throughout the European film industry, in nations that Germany was allied with (such as Mussolini's Italy) or befriended (such as Franco's Spain), as well as in areas occupied by Nazi Germany, where the influence was felt even more strongly. This book contributes to research on this international, German-orientated part of the film industry.

New Sources, New Perspectives

Erwin Leiser (*Deutschland Erwache!,* 1968), Gerd Albrecht (*Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik*, 1969), David Stewart Hull (*Film in the Third Reich*, 1969), and Francis Courtade and Pierre Cadars (*Histoire du Cinéma Nazi*, 1972) were among the first to publish monographs on German films made in the 'Third Reich', a topic that has since been the subject of many more publications.[2] Some historians of the German film industry (1933–1945) paid attention to its international expansion, yet they based their accounts, for understandable reasons, mostly on sources that had survived in German archives. Their research did not take into consideration the interesting sources to be found on this topic in former occupied territories. After the retreat of the German troops and liberation from Nazism in 1944–1945, European film sectors repaired or reorganized themselves. Although some of the measures introduced by the Germans were tacitly retained (because it was politically sensitive to recognize their value openly), many others were rescinded or undone. Investigations were launched into people who could be held 'responsible' for the crimes of the previous years: compatriots who had 'collaborated' with the Germans during the occupation and who had facilitated the implementation of German film policy. Some of them were prosecuted and punished: sometimes by the courts, sometimes also more indirectly by trade unions or similar bodies. There are some similarities to be drawn between the fate of those professionals and the fate of non-Germans who had built a successful career in the film industry of the 'Third Reich'. Those who remained in Germany (Johannes Heesters, Kristina Söderbaum, Marika Rökk, etc.) were often treated more leniently than those who returned to their country of origin (e.g., in the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, film actor René Deltgen was put on trial for treason and

condemned to prison, fined, and suffered a loss of his civil rights). This, however, would be a subject for another book.

These investigations into 'collaborators' and subsequent trials left behind a trail of documents. Some of these archival sources have been available for decades, others were only released or declassified more recently (such as those examined in the chapter about Ivan Nikitin in this volume). These source materials, which are related to the implementation of German film policy in a particular region, were regularly used in publications dedicated to that region and addressed to an audience interested in that region. As a consequence, for a long time, the results of such regionally or nationally based research were only available to those who read the local language. This made it very difficult for scholars to engage in comparative research, which would juxtapose and compare the German film policy (or policies) pursued in different occupied countries.

Although there is undeniably still a great deal of research to be done in this area, important steps were taken with the publication of the monograph *Der deutsche Film 1938–1945* (1987) and with the edited volume *Cinema and the Swastika: The International Expansion of Third Reich Cinema* (2007).[3] The latter, which was republished in paperback format with an additional chapter in 2011, contained contributions from more than 20 historians, many of whom had been conducting research for many years, but only published a summary of their research results in English for the first time in this book. This was an initiative towards international, collaborative research into the influence of the German film industry on the international film world in the years 1939–1945. In the wake of this book, several authors published additional contributions (separately or jointly) while other researchers joined the effort to fill in existing gaps in our knowledge of this area.[4]

Many (but certainly not all) academic studies of European film industries that were controlled or significantly reshaped by Nazi Germany tend to provide rather general, descriptive overviews that reconstruct cultural policy and cinema infrastructure.[5] There is much to be said for such an approach, because this type of top-down analysis is often necessary to understand larger processes. Nevertheless, a bird's-eye view on film and cultural policy also has its limitations, as it leaves little room for analytical insights into the dynamics of specific changes that happened during the Second World War.[6]

The chapters in this book seek to counterbalance that perspective by analysing the evolving strategies and practices used by individuals, who

had—or believed they had—a certain capacity or autonomy to influence the cinema industry in occupied territories and who mediated between the agenda of the 'Third Reich' cinema apparatus and the film industry of their own region or country. The chapters in this book do not necessarily take a bottom-up approach, but rather focus on the centre: on members of the civil society in German-occupied territories, who seized or at least accepted the opportunity to play a significant role in a film sector that was now German-controlled. The film industries and cinema cultures of countries occupied by Nazi Germany (1939–1945) are studied from the point of view of individuals: local 'captains of industry', cinema managers, people working for film studios, or officials authorized to navigate film policy. This approach allows us to understand German attempts to reorganize the film sectors of occupied territories as mediated by both German and non-German 'middle-men', who moved between the occupation authorities and the structures of the occupied film industry; by creative personalities with the power to promote their agendas; by producers who were able to maintain their financial resources and exercised some power in the production milieu; or by groups (such as those formed by cinema managers). These middle-men are analysed from a historical perspective, taking into account their career before the occupation and, when relevant, also paying attention to what happened to them after the war. The perspectives of these 'historical agents' can substantially contribute to an understanding of the way top-down orders or haphazard signals from the occupying administration were moulded, adjusted, or distorted in the process of incorporating them into the pre-established local structures. In some cases, the post-war fates of these individuals—such as Havel and Söhnel, whose stories have the dramatic quality of a spy novel—reveal just how radically the decisions made by film professionals under occupation were re-evaluated after the war.

Overall, the chapters in this volume aim to make an original contribution to an under-researched field, as well as to give a new impetus to discussions of transnational dynamics in cinema culture. The volume's perspective offers a more dynamic and less deterministic approach to the topic—an approach that strives to balance the role of individual agency with structural determinants. The nine case studies presented in this book cover the territories of the pre-war states of Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and the Soviet Union. The chapters focus on the careers of film professionals during the occupation and examine the stories of 12 individuals who operated in the occupied

territory of these 7 pre-war independent countries. Their pre-war professions and positions held during the war cover a broad range, including film director, technical inventor, producer, cinema manager, lawyer, cinema technician, or guild head. Two of the individuals (Wilhelm Söhnel and Anton Zankl) were so-called ethnic Germans or *Volksdeutsche*: people who did not hold German citizenship (at least not before the German occupation of the region in which they lived) but who were nevertheless regarded as 'German' by the National Socialists, because they spoke the language and were culturally connected to the German nation. Two others—Georg-Wilhelm Müller and Wilhelm Müller-Scheld—were Germans who were dropped into a country they knew virtually nothing about (Norway). We are introduced to a spectrum of individuals of diverse cultural and professional backgrounds with differing degrees of economic, cultural, and social capital.

Occupying Regimes and Occupied Industries

It should not be forgotten that the German film industry was not prepared for the outbreak of war in September 1939 and certainly not for the strings of victories that would follow until 1941–1942, which would vastly expand the market for German films. Military preparations had been made for a series of campaigns, but there was no blueprint for the subsequent phases: how to govern an occupied country, what economic policies to follow, and so on. All of this was in limbo. This was not necessarily the case for sectors that were of very great military importance—such as metals, minerals, and wood—but in many other areas it was. Thus, there was experimentation, a process of trial and error whereby different means were applied for different contexts, for instance, for regimes of civil administration (*Zivilverwaltung*) versus those of military administration (*Militärverwaltung*). In the first case, the *Reichsministerium für Volksaufklährung und Propaganda* (Reich Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, RMVP) could send in its agents. These were often, but not always, ardent Nazis who had joined the party prior to working for the National Socialist government. They had to contend with the local leaders of the *Zivilverwaltung* and with local fascists who wanted to collaborate, yet who also wanted to have power for themselves. In the second alternative, the *Wehrmachtpropaganda* department of the Germany Military Forces would dispatch its own *Propagandastaffeln* or *Propaganda-Abteilunge*:

their members might be National Socialists, but not necessarily. They were often simply experienced civilians who were well versed in the relevant business area (cinema managers, film distributors, etc.) and, therefore, received a designated function. It was not unusual for such persons to be promoted to a military rank (*Sonderführer* or 'special leader') without proper military training, just to ensure that they would be able to function properly within the German administration.

But the differences were not limited to the type of occupational regime one had to work with. The 'locals' who collaborated with the German film industry in occupied areas did so for a variety of reasons. Some felt ideologically attracted to Nazi Germany; some did not. Some resigned themselves to the fact that their film industry had to orient itself towards Germany; others did not and resisted, openly or secretly. Some also changed their attitude during the course of the occupation. The military and political context in 1941 was very different from that in 1944. As such, the behaviour and ambitions of those who were active at the time could also change.

Admittedly, faced with such changes, the industry—guided by the propaganda ministry and by Goebbels' trustee Max Winkler (*Reichsbeauftragter für die deutsche Filmwirtschaft* or Reich Plenipotentiary for the German Film Industry)—adapted relatively quickly. Several measures, notably the enforced closure of American film distributors within and outside the Reich, increased the demand for German films. All over Europe, Ufa and Tobis either established new distribution branches or were able to strengthen the market position of already existing subsidiaries.[7] Meanwhile, in countries that had been annexed or occupied, new production centres were established, often absorbing local companies (which ceased to exist as individual entities). This led to the establishment of *Wien-Film* in Austria, *Prag-Film* in the Czech lands, *Continental Films* in France, and the *Zentrallfilmgesellschaft Ost* (ZFO) and its subsidiaries (*Ostland Filmgesellschaft* and *Ukraine-Filmgesellschaft*) in Poland and the occupied zones of the Soviet Union. In the Netherlands too, local studio facilities were seized and used for the production of German films. Meanwhile, Max Winkler used his trust company (*Cautio GmbH*) to openly or secretly acquire foreign theatres: preferably prestigious film palaces that attracted large audiences in order to recuperate more ticket office revenues. In spite of enlarging the number of studios where new films could be made, the production rate of new films did not accelerate enough to provide the vast quantity that these new markets needed. In order to rationalize film

production, Winkler and Goebbels decided to completely take over the film industry. All the most important production and distribution companies had already been acquired by the state years before, but as of 10 January 1942, they were brought together in a giant holding company: Ufa-Film GmbH (Ufi). The creation of Ufi and the nationalization of the German film industry were cost-efficient and also influenced the organization of German film export. In theory, the new Ufi company needed a new foreign department to oversee the foreign film trade of all German companies. In practice, it was the foreign department of the 'old' Ufa company that took over the foreign business of the other companies. By consequence, the foreign subsidiaries of Tobis had to be taken over.

Despite these attempts to decrease costs and increase production, the German film industry was never able to reach its production target of 100 films a year. By consequence, older German films were re-released and films from befriended nations (and members of the International Film Chamber) such as Hungary and Italy had to be imported, usually in German-dubbed versions. The celebration of Ufa/Ufi's 25th anniversary in March 1943 was the proverbial beginning of the end. The German film industry had conquered the European film markets thanks to the successes of the Wehrmacht, so it was only logical that it would lose those areas again as the German troops started to cede ground. In 1944–1945, the film industry lost its foreign markets and production centres.[8]

Theoretical Underpinnings

This volume is not a mere collection of chapters describing individual career paths. It does not delineate individual biographies that have been overlooked. Instead, through the consequent case studies, we seek to contextualize the phenomenon of how German cinema and the film culture of other countries coalesced in various ways. The examinations of the people covered in the following chapters illustrate these complex phenomena by looking more closely at their behaviour and decisions, as conditioned both by their own ambitions and by the conditions they faced during the war.

This kind of research must contend with the duality of individual agency versus structural and social determinants. It is a problem that haunts social and cultural histories in general and biographical studies in particular, as the volume *Biography Between Structure and Agency* (2008) announced already in its title.[9] In his two-volume biography of Adolf Hitler—arguably the most influential study of a Nazi perpetrator—Ian Kershaw

introduced structural elements into biographical research and, vice versa, used biographical insights to explicate the structures.[10] The volume at hand does not offer stories about the most influential people in the German film industry such as Joseph Goebbels, nor does it analyse famous 'Third Reich' film directors such as Leni Riefenstahl, Veit Harlan, or Hans Steinhoff.[11] Unless they are specialists of the national film history of the concerned region, readers will hardly recognize any of the names, with the possible exception of the Czech film magnate and Barrandov Studios founder Miloš Havel. Names like Jan Vanderheyden, Edith Kiel, and Jan Teunissen may be recognized by connoisseurs of the film history of the Low Countries, and Jan Fethke by people familiarized with history of Polish cinema, but not by others. Other names, such as Meisenzahl and Nikitin, will likely not be even recognized by a specialist.

Despite the apparently obscure personalities these chapters shed light on, there are at least three highly important insights we can gain through studies of the middle-men who strove to implement the German cultural policy of the 'New Order', or negotiated between the occupying administration on the one side, and the local film industry's traditions and interests on the other. Firstly, the men (and one woman) examined here were—with the exception of the Czech film magnate Miloš Havel—not celebrities, although they were well known in the local film industry in which they were active. Zooming in on their activities and whereabouts helps us to understand the conditions in the 'occupied societies' (*Besatzungsgesellschaften*). Justifiably, this concept promoted by the German historian Tatjana Tönsmeyer demands an analysis of everyday choices and a reconstruction of the range of options that people living in the occupied societies had at their disposal.[12] The administrations established a hierarchical formal order, but the hierarchy only determined the context to a certain extent. Informal personal relationships were cultivated, which increased the chances to attaint certain material or non-material benefits. Many people in the occupied societies, including those whose biographies are reconstructed in this volume, assumed the position of patrons, distributing information and capital according to their own interests and goals. The analysis of the dynamics of such clientele networks offers a productive perspective, especially in the case of the film industry, which endowed its personalities with a range of valuable resources that were available for 'exchange'.

Secondly, the analyses of the roles of individuals offer a reflection on the agency-structure dichotomy and insight into the dynamics of German

intentions were transferred into the local milieu. Although Martin's *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture* analyses the cultural infrastructures that were established in order to create a cultural 'New Order', more research is needed about the ways in which such plans were implemented.[13] Thanks to the detailed, extensively contextualized, and biographically based studies presented in this volume, we can observe the processes, events, and dynamic changes that mediated between German cultural policy and the situation in the occupied countries, as has been reconstructed, for example, in the books by Ingo Schiweck (Netherlands), Volker Mohn (Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia), Paul Lesch (Luxembourg), Kathrin Engel (France), and David Frey (Hungary).[14] This approach focuses on the restrictions that limited the middle-men's capacity for agency and strives to describe the division of power between the German and the local administration. As William H. Sewell points out, however, any division between agency and structure is conceptually unsatisfying for a cultural historian. Instead of being traditionally *opposed to* a structure, agency in Sewell's approach is a *constituent of* a structure, that is, of a set of mutually sustaining cultural schemas and resources.[15] To be an agent demands knowledge of social life's informing schema, as well as an array of human and non-human resources. To apply that perspective to our case of film professionals who occupied the position of middle-men, we can recognize what material and non-material resources the agents had at their disposal, what schemas they applied, and, consequently, whether they affirmed or changed the structures. Endowed with these analytical tools, we can shift from the moralizing vocabulary of collaboration and resistance towards a perspective that has the capacity to analyse an individual's strategies and decisions without the psychological burden of weighing good or bad intentions.[16]

Thirdly, the agency of the middle-men discussed in these chapters strongly evokes the concept of transnationalism in the sense of 'a special category of social relations that unfolds in tension with and in contradiction to the assertion of national sovereignties'.[17] These individuals were brokers between social spheres that differed in language, national identity, and culture, as well as sources of power. Most of them accepted this role voluntarily, even eagerly. They varied in their dispositions for the professional, institutional, and social positions they held—but with the exception of the two Germans sent to Norway, Wilhelm Müller-Scheld and Georg-Wilhelm Müller, all of them were bilingual, familiar with both German and indigenous cultures, and socially rooted in the local context.

This, however, did not save them from being ostracized when their role as mediators terminated with the defeat of Nazi Germany. Before this happened, though, they lived through several years of rapid professional, financial, and social mobility; institutional and moral responsibility; and appeals to their national or social loyalty. Some of them arguably failed, while the fates of others illustrate a failure of the post-war mechanisms of justice. Instead of defining the lines between collaboration and resistance, however, this book focuses on the transnational network of personal connections and highlights the role of these historical agents who navigated a minefield of overlapping nationalities, cultures, and industries.

Middle-Men and Agency

The monumental changes in the occupational regimes or in the German film industry that were briefly described above were far beyond the capacity or the competence of the middle-men that feature in this book. Nevertheless, the capital and resources they had established before the war, and which were challenged or significantly boosted by the occupation, thrust them into their positions of historical agents with the capacity to influence local film milieus, the routines of the film business, and individual fates.

In Norway, the competency of both Georg-Wilhelm Müller and Wilhelm Müller-Scheld (German officials whose roles in the propaganda division at the *Reichskommissariat Norwegen* are analysed by Thomas V.H. Hagen and Tobias Hochscherf) was based solely on their party loyalty and long career (Georg-Wilhelm Müller joined the NSDAP in 1927 when he was 18)—neither of them was familiar with the Norwegian culture. Müller's career advancement was accelerated by his personal contact with Goebbels, while Müller-Scheld lost his position at *Deutsche Filmakademie* thanks to Goebbels' critical view of his abilities. Consequently, it was the younger Müller who served as patron to Müller-Scheld thanks to his political capital. While the aesthete and intellectual Müller-Scheld became fond of Norwegian culture, Müller was not engaged with it at all. The German and the Norwegian views of the ill-mannered Müller were contradictory: Goebbels was enthusiastic, while local pro-German businessmen or politicians in Norway were rather repulsed by his ignorance. No locals, including members of the fascist Norwegian party *Nasjonal Samling* (National Rally) established significant contact with

him. Still, both Goebbels and *Reichskommissar* (Reich Commissioner) Josef Terboven appreciated Müller's authority and dedication.

As Hagen and Hochscherf point out, the fact that Georg-Wilhelm Müller's cultural incompetence did not pose a threat to his position might be connected to the traditionally positive attitude of Norwegians towards German culture. By contrast, the occupying administration in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia perceived the attitude of Czechs towards German media, entertainment, and propaganda as rife with tension and so, due to the territory's importance for both heavy industry and film production, a more careful approach was the order of the day in the early stages of occupation. Anton Zankl and Wilhelm Söhnel, whose portraits are provided by Tereza Czesany Dvořáková and Volker Mohn, are examples of individuals whose knowledge of the Czech milieu and language had a significant influence on their positions. Zankl's career was hindered due to racial issues, but thanks to the patronage of the German State Secretary in the Protectorate K.H. Frank, this did not thwart his career. Söhnel was a lawyer—a common profession among high-ranking Nazi officials—but he did not follow a political career: he joined the NSDAP in 1939 primarily for pragmatic reasons and was not an ardent Nazi at all. His position as the head of Reichsprotector's Joint Office (*Verbindungsstelle*) in the Bohemian-Moravian Film Union put him in the role of mediator between the German administration and the local film industry. Zankl and Söhnel were supposed to influence the Czech film milieu to the advantage of German goals, but both of them (Söhnel to a much larger extent) occasionally patronized Czech filmmakers in order to increase their status among cinema society's upper crust and maintain a lavish lifestyle in the era of war-time shortages.

By contrast, Heinrich Meisenzahl, whose role as director of *Lothringer Lichtspieltheater* is sketched by Anthony Rescigno, embodied all the demands for a local persona acting on behalf of the Reich film industry's interests: he was German by origin, well acquainted with the local milieu of the Alsace-Lorraine province which had been newly incorporated into the Reich (having lived in the administrative centre of the province, Metz, for years before the war), certified as 'politically reliable', and had professional experience managing cinemas. The last of these qualities, professional experience, was one of the decisive competencies that provided local individuals the opportunity to assume important positions under occupation and become mediators between the occupiers and the indigenous milieu. Of course, other capacities were essential as well, although to

varying degrees of importance. Personal and professional ambition was an obvious precondition, as was evident especially in the career paths of the Norwegian, Belgian, and Dutch film directors, Leif Sinding, Jan Vanderheyden, and Jan Teunissen. None of the local agents examined in this volume were truly forced to assume their role during the occupation. Their willingness to tow the political lines and participate in Nazi politics aided their careers. Sinding entered the Norwegian Nazi party *Nasjonal Samling* (National Rally, NS) in 1940, more for reasons of career advancement than out of political conviction. This journalist, writer, producer, and one of the three leading Norwegian film directors of the 1930s was appointed as head of the National Film Directorate in 1941 with the task of reorganizing the cinema industry of occupied Norway. As Thomas Hagen argues in his chapter on Sinding, the Germans did not strongly involve themselves in the matters of the weak Norwegian film industry and Sinding acted more as a buffer against intervention from the NS than from the German administration.

The Dutch and Belgian film officials and directors Jan Teunissen and Jan Vanderheyden did not have the same profile, but their life stories share some interesting similarities. Before the war, Teunissen first was a failed director, who had worked his way up to become a recognized film editor in the Netherlands. Vanderheyden was actually a failed director as well, but was able to partially conceal this fact thanks to his technically more gifted partner, the German-born Edith Kiel. Supported by Kiel, Vanderheyden received much more public recognition (in the Flemish part of Belgium) than Teunissen did in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, both of them had the feeling that they were capable of doing something bigger, and both recognized their chance after their countries were occupied. Teunissen joined the Dutch National Socialists. By contrast, Vanderheyden did not need to make the step, because his German partner was able to join the 'real' Nazi party. Both Teunissen and Vanderheyden eventually received the title of 'Leader' of the Film Guild that was founded in their country at the instigation of the occupying forces, but neither of them was given the power to truly reform the film sector as they saw fit and ended up mainly carrying out German orders instead. Teunissen sometimes resisted the occupying forces more strongly than Vanderheyden, but in general, both followed their marching orders. While hardly any local films were allowed to be made by other directors in both Belgium and the Netherlands, Teunissen and, to an even greater extent, Vanderheyden were able to use their positions to realize a number of film

productions. Both were also able to ensure that the films they had produced, or for which they had distribution rights, were guaranteed an outlet.

In the General Government (composed of a portion of pre-war Poland), knowledge of German language and culture was just as much an essential capacity for maintaining a career and achieving positions of significance as it was in Belgium or the Netherlands. The film director Jan Fethke, whose story is provided here by Krzysztof Trojanowski, was Polish by ethnicity, but German by citizenship. When the Germans invaded Kyiv, the Ukrainian sound engineer Ivan Nikitin declared himself to be a *Volksdeutscher*, that is, an ethnic German, as described in the chapter by Tatiana Manykina. In combination with his extraordinary professional competency, this designation helped him to rise to a leading position at the Kyiv Film Studio. The Czech Miloš Havel, whose essential role for Czech film production in the Protectorate is presented in Pavel Skopal's chapter, cultivated active business contacts within the German film milieu in the 1930s and believed for a time that it would be possible for him to continue developing indigenous film production under the occupation.

This collection of 12 career paths provides an array of concrete choices made by individuals under the specific conditions of occupation, which had tragic consequences for millions, including some of our agents. Although their decisions were shaped by factors that were beyond their influence, they nevertheless still had agency in making decisions with significant consequences for many people within their radius of power. The following elaborate reconstructions of the capacities and resources they had at their disposal offer detailed, concrete, and illuminating insights into the dilemmas they faced and the decisions they made.

Notes

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the German occupation, which resulted in his monograph *Dansk film under nazismen* (2014). For five of those who did contribute, their chapter in the edited volume was a stepping stone towards a monograph: Frey, D. (2018) *Jews, Nazis, and the Cinema of Hungary*. London—New York: I.B. Tauris. Martin, B. G. (2016) *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; Montero, J. & Paz, M.-A. (2009) *La larga sombra de Hitler: El cine nazi en España (1933–1945*). Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra; Rafaelic, D. (2013) *Kinematografija u NDH*. Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak.

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8. This paragraph is largely based on R. Vande Winkel and D. Welch's 'Europe's New Hollywood? The German Film Industry Under Nazi Rule, 1933–45'. pp. 6–24 in Vande Winkel, R. & Welch, D. (2011 rev.)
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CHAPTER 2

‘Hero and Villain’: Leif Sinding as a Mediator of Cinema Politics in Occupied Norway

Thomas V. H. Hagen

Introduction

Leif Sinding (1895–1985) was a Norwegian journalist, writer, producer, and director who made fourteen films between 1925 and 1956. He began his career as a film critic in 1916, when he founded and edited a film magazine with the almost prophetic title *Helt og Skurk* (Hero and Villain). From 1941 to 1942, he was the first head of *Statens filmdirektorat* (National Film Directorate, SF) installed by the *Kultur-og folkeopplysningsdepartementet* (Ministry of Culture and Popular Enlightenment, KFD) as a tool to reorganise cinema in occupied Norway.[1] Thus, Sinding was the primary mediator between German policymakers, the Norwegian Nazi party *Nasjonal Samling* (National Rally, NS[2]), the film industry, and cinema operators. In 1950, Sinding was sentenced to four years of forced labour for treason.[3] However, he continued to be a part of the Norwegian

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P. Skopal, R. Vande Winkel (eds.), *Film Professionals in Nazi-Occupied Europe*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61634-2_2

film industry and was involved in three film productions in the 1950s. In fact, he succeeded in securing his place in the national film history as both a film pioneer and a prolific and popular filmmaker, relatively untouched by his former political career during World War II.[4]

This chapter has a twofold purpose. First, it aims to explore the complexity of the relationship between the occupier and the occupied, as well as the inherent contradictions and constraints of both German and Norwegian cinema politics. Secondly, it aims to examine and explain the conditions for the re-appropriation of a discredited film professional and official in post-war Norwegian society.[5]

In both cases, a closer examination of Leif Sinding's different roles as film professional, director, official, and politician before, during, and after World War II will shed light on the topic at hand in interesting ways.

Two terms demand preliminary explanation. First, the German word *Gleichschaltung*, which describes the process of forced assimilation of institutions and organizations within the state apparatus and all sections of civil society.[6] In the absence of a fully satisfactory English translation, I have decided to retain the German term.[7] *Gleichschaltung* can be used to describe and explain processes on every level of the Reich's authority. My use of the term in this chapter is confined to the cinema politics of German-occupied Norway. Second, I employ the term *cultural propaganda* to describe the specific cultural-political context, within which cinema policies in Norway were designed, adapted, implemented, and adjusted. Cultural propaganda can be defined as political communication using cultural means.[8]

Some remarks on the structure of this chapter: First, I briefly present the cinema situation in Norway in 1940 and outline some key features of Norwegian society during the German occupation (sections "Norwegian Cinema" and "Norway and World War II"). Then, I introduce the most important German and Norwegian institutions and individuals of the first war year (section "From Spring 1940 to December 1940: Opportunities"). The main part of the chapter consists of an analysis of Sinding's personal agency—his actions and positions during the war—in two stages; first as head of SF from 1941 to 1942 (section "1941–1942: Revolution and Resourcefulness"), then as film director, producer, and politician from 1943 to 1945 (section "From 1943 to May 1945: Discouragement and Desperation"). Thereafter, I address the post-war period looking into both the initial stage of incrimination and exclusion from the film industry, and the subsequent period, which included his final film projects

(section "From 1945 to 1956: Atonement"). Finally, I will assess Sinding's legacy beyond his retirement from film in 1956 and eventually from life three decades later (section "Legacy (1956 Until Today): The Crafting of a Narrative").

Norwegian Cinema

The film industry in Norway in 1940 was characterised by three features. First, there was the municipal cinema system created in 1913 which gave municipalities a monopoly on licensing film exhibition. As a result, profits from ticket sales went to the municipal treasury. The high cinema revenues in interwar Oslo did not lead to an upswing in film production, but were instead converted into libraries, swimming pools, and parks (the Vigeland sculpture installation in Oslo's Frogner Park is one example).[9]

Second, the cinema landscape was very diverse, due to relatively minimal urbanisation and low population density compared to Sweden and Denmark. In the 1930s, there were more than 700 municipalities, with a total number of 292 cinemas, of which 116 were operated by the municipalities themselves.[10] Thus, the majority of cinemas in 1940 were still either private or run by associations (*foreningskinoer*), such as People's Houses (working-class community centres), labour unions, sports clubs and civilian marksmanship associations, sanitation and youth associations, and folk academies. Nevertheless, the municipal cinemas accounted for 90 percent of total cinema attendance.[11] Norway's topographic and demographic conditions, with scattered settlements across an elongated and hilly country, meant that many people lived far from a fixed regular cinema. This created a business opportunity for the many travelling cinemas, most of which were sole proprietorships.[12]

Third, there was a general opinion in 1940 that the last few years had been a long-awaited 'Golden Age' for Norwegian film, which until then had suffered from an inferiority complex in light of the impressive legacies of neighbouring countries.[13] Leif Sinding was one of the nation's three leading film directors next to Tancred Ibsen and Rasmus Breistein. Sinding's films *Bra mennesker* (*Good People*, 1937), *Eli Sjursdotter* (1938), and *De vergeløse* (*The Defenseless*, 1939) were all commercial successes. Ibsen's *Fant* (*The Gypsy*, 1937) and *Gjest Baardsen* (1939), and Breistein's *Ungen* (*The Kid*, 1938), reached even larger audiences.[14] There was, however, only one film studio in Norway, and the Norwegian film industry produced no more than three or four films annually in the late 1930s.

These films were distributed to the cinemas by twenty-three different film rental agencies.[15]

Norway and World War II

Neutral Norway was invaded by German troops on 9 April 1940. The Norwegian armed forces capitulated after sixty-three days, on 10 June, and the King and government escaped to the UK. The Germans quickly established a civil administration in Oslo, the *Reichskommissariat* (Reich Commissariat), led by Josef Terboven. The King and government-in-exile in London supported the resistance in occupied Norway. The resistance movement fought on two fronts: against the German occupying power and against Vidkun Quisling's Nazi NS party. NS's goal was to carry out a National Socialist revolution in Norway. In September 1940, all political parties except NS were banned, and new NS ministries were installed, called the 'new order'. From 1942, Quisling was appointed Minister President of the collaborative Norwegian government.

The occupation regime in Norway was relatively mild. However, the German Security Police was as brutal in Norway as in other occupied countries in Western Europe. Almost 10,000 Norwegians died during World War II and 44,000 (about 1.5 per percent of the population) were imprisoned for political reasons.[16] Another 50,000 Norwegians escaped to Sweden. The most important Norwegian contribution to the Allied war effort was 1000 ships and 30,000 seafarers in the merchant fleet.[17]

The Nazification of civilian society resulted in much of the cultural life going underground. However, throughout the occupation, the breadth of cultural activities, including cinema, was largely maintained and was relatively easily accessible to large parts of the population. The presence of a high concentration of German soldiers to maintain military control over the strategically important territory—located between the Soviet Union in the east and the North Sea in the west—made a distinctive mark on everyday life in occupied Norway. In total, Germans made up 10–15 percent of the population, but with a much higher proportion in certain areas, especially in northern Norway. The Germans in Norway were also consumers of culture, and the Wehrmacht gave high priority to *Truppenbetreuung* (soldier welfare), which also included film supply and cinema facilities.

From Spring 1940 to December 1940: Opportunities

This period is characterised by a high level of German activities and measures. Leif Sinding did not play a political role in the first six months of the occupation, but he positioned himself to be considered for important future tasks. From spring 1940 until the end of the year, the *Reich Commissariat* in Oslo made plans for the future organisation of cinema in occupied Norway. For the most part, they operated on their own, without active participation from Norwegian collaborators. The *Reich Commissariat* had a propaganda department (*Hauptabteilung für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*, HAVP) led by Georg-Wilhelm Müller, a friend and close associate of Goebbels. This department functioned as a kind of foreign branch of the *Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* (Reich Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, RMVP).

Within HAVP there was a Cultural Branch, led by Wilhelm Müller-Scheld, former president of the *Deutsche Filmakademie* (German Film Academy). The first measures Müller-Scheld and his staff set their eyes on were the following six tasks: the pre-censorship of new film scripts, the re-censorship of previously approved films according to the new guidelines from the State Film Control, the closure of 'American agencies' distributing films from the US, the full stoppage of the distribution of American films from other agencies, the increased import of German films, and, finally, the removal of Social Democrat Kristoffer Aamot from key positions in the cinema business, including as cinema director in Oslo. By December, Müller-Scheld had achieved a lot of this.

Müller and Müller-Scheld were the two most important cultural propagandists in the *Reich Commissariat*.[18] Marked tensions between propagandists and technocrats emerged in the formative phase of HAVP's activity. When it came to streamlining Norway as part of the German-controlled European film market, some of Berlin's best brains were sent to Oslo in 1940 to prepare the ground. When they had achieved what they wanted, they withdrew and left the rest to HAVP and the Norwegians.[19] The prospects for profit and the desire to create soft power for Nazi Germany were as important to propagandists as the dissemination of National Socialist ideas. Profits and propaganda went hand in hand. The most notable German film technocrat in Oslo in 1940 was Gustav Schmidt, a special representative of the German film industry. He acted with wide powers and had one mission: to secure a film 'highway' from Germany to Norway. In August 1940, he invited several Norwegian filmmakers, including

Ibsen, Breistein, and Sinding, to an orientation meeting.[20] Schmidt's main message was that the Norwegian film market was so small that it was inappropriate to try to maintain the national film industry. Sinding explained after the war that the meeting with Schmidt had upset everyone, and that they therefore initiated negotiations with Müller-Scheld immediately. According to Sinding's post-war testimony, the meeting with Schmidt was the direct reason why he decided to join NS, thereby enabling him to help secure Norwegian interests in cinema politics.[21]

Terboven's new order of 25 September 1940 saw the creation of several new Norwegian ministries, among them KFD, modelled on Goebbels's Propaganda Ministry in Berlin. Dr Gulbrand Lunde (1901–1942) was appointed Minister of Culture. Although a film enthusiast and cine-amateur, Lunde's career background was as a chemist and director in the canning industry in Stavanger. Lunde was a talented administrator and speaker, who had joined NS already in 1933. The ministry's main question at the time was how cinema policies could be best shaped and implemented. Since cinema was only one of many priorities for Lunde, who was the minister responsible for everything spanning from broadcasting and the press via exhibitions and propaganda to literature, theatre, and the fine arts, the solution was to establish a national directorate for film, SF. In fact, the idea of a Norwegian governmental authority to implement new cinema policies actually preceded the formation of KFD. But the fulfilment of this mission was not realized until later in the autumn, under Lunde's leadership. Lunde and Sinding probably did not meet until November 1940.[22] SF was not a 'gift' from the *Reich Commissariat*, as it has often been portrayed,[23] but arose as a result of a process that went from the summer of 1940 until the end of the year. Wilhelm Müller-Scheld did not come to Norway with a clear idea of what was to be done and was probably relieved when he met Sinding, who was operating with 'full plans' in his head.[24]

In late November or early December, it had become known in the cinema business that Leif Sinding would be appointed director of SF. This shocked Sinding's colleagues in the film industry to such an extent that they appealed to Lunde to replace him. A major concern was the potential competitive advantage Sinding's new position would give him as an active producer and filmmaker. The appointment of Sinding—a notorious advocate of privatisation—had the immediate consequence that 'municipality Norway' was quickly mobilised, even across political divisions. Even though it must have been demanding for Sinding to be thwarted even

before SF was established, there was also the opportunity to play a role here—a role that had been long planned in his mind.

Sinding was about to fill a power vacuum that existed because of what Austrian historian Martin Moll has described as 'institutional pluralism' on the German side. The occupying power rested on three pillars: the *Reich Commissariat*, the Wehrmacht, and the units of the *Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer Nord* (Superior SS and Police Leader for the North, HSSPN). The latter, under the command of Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Rediess, encompassed all German SS and police units in Norway, including the *Sicherheitspolizei* (Security Police, SiPo) and the *Sicherheitsdienst* (Security Service, SD).[25] For Reich Commissioner Terboven and his men, the aim was that no part of Norwegian society should be free from Nazi 'political and propagandist presence', as historian Hans-Dietrich Loock has put it.[26] Each of these three institutions of power had various resources and tools at their disposal and worked to realize their own interests in cultural propaganda, including in the realm of cinema. The table below gives an overview of the most important German and Norwegian institutional entities, which to varying degrees exerted pressure and sought control of cinema in Norway. It is not supposed to mirror exactly the structure of the three aforementioned pillars but rather the plethora of different agents and institutions which were in place in Norway under the auspices of Terboven (Table 2.1).

It is especially in the period from September 1940 to the beginning of 1941 that these 'exceptional interests' associated with various German and Norwegian entities were institutionalised. The KFD and later the SF (in full operation from 1 January 1941) were powerful Norwegian agents within local cinema politics. Their formation, however, was not part of a carefully drawn up German plan. The plan was conceived along the way.[27] In my opinion, as I have detailed elsewhere (see Hagen 2018), there is no trace of any real tension between Oslo and Berlin when it came to the content of cultural propaganda. The relationship between propagandists on the one hand and technocrats acting on behalf of the German film industry on the other was mainly about streamlining the cinema system economically and structurally.

The institutional pluralism described by Moll was a key framework for the Reich Commissariat's performance of its mission. The table above indicates the overarching goal of each institution in the field of cinema. While *Gleichschaltung* was the deciding factor for the RMVP and the RMVP-controlled IFC,[28] military-strategic interests and cultural capital

Table 2.1 Norwegian cinema 1940–1945: propagandists and spheres of interest

	Josef Terboven *Reich Commissioner*				
I	*Propaganda Ministry* Joseph Goebbels	*Wehrmacht*	*HAVP* G.W. Müller	*Ministry of Culture and Popular Enlightenment* Gulbrand Lunde (1940–1942) Rolf Fuglesang (1942–1945)	*Nasjonal Samling* (NS)
II	*Film Office* *Foreign Office*	Propaganda offices	*Cultural Branch* Wilhelm Müller-Scheld	*National Film Directorate* Leif Sinding (1941–1942) Birger Rygh Hallan (1943–1944) Arne Stig (1944–1945)	*Reich Propaganda Leadership*
III	*Gleichschaltung*	Military interests	Cultural propaganda abroad ('soft power')	Reorganising Norwegian cinema	Propaganda for the Norwegian NS party
IV	*International Federation of Cinema* (IFC) Special Envoy Gustav Schmidt	Propaganda companies Local commandants	Regional and local offices	Cinema boards	Regional and local party units and officials
V	Distribution Export Censorship	War propaganda Troop welfare German news reels	Overseeing cultural politics and cultural life in occupied Norway Censorship	Production (cultural films, feature films) Distribution Export/import Regulation of cinemas	Production (party film, educational film, news reels, commercials) Distribution

This table was first presented in Hagen (2018), p. 291. It is inspired by Julian Petley's overview of the structure of the German film industry under Goebbels. Petley, J. (1979) *Capital and Culture: German Cinema 1933–45*, London: British Film Institute, p. 83

The top row (I) describes the different institutional spheres; the second row (II) describes the main responsible bodies; the third row (III) describes the overarching aim of each institution; the fourth row (IV) describes some key executive units on the operative level; and, finally, the bottom row (V) describes what were the primary interests of each institutional sphere

through cultural propaganda were the overarching goals of the Wehrmacht and HAVP, respectively.[29] What this meant was that there was a vast space for manoeuvring, mediating, and moulding cinema politics in Norway. The man who seized this opportunity was Leif Sinding. When Sinding was formally given the assignment to take over as director of SF on 2 December 1940, this position was created *for* him and, to a great extent, created *by* him as well.[30]

The year 1940 was a fantastic year for Leif Sinding. His film *Tante Pose* (*Aunt Pose*, 1940) was well into post-production when the Germans invaded in April. In September 1940, *Aunt Pose* became the first Norwegian film to premiere during the occupation, to huge success (Fig. 2.1). In December, he was given the task to reorganise cinema in Norway, which he had been eager to do for twenty years. His future was full of promise.

1941–1942: Revolution and Resourcefulness

SF functioned as a resourceful governmental body in charge of all aspects of the reorganisation of cinema, from A to Z. Nevertheless, in the end of 1942, Sinding was seeking a way out. Although continuing to play a role in cinema politics as film representative in *Kulturrådet* (the Arts Council), he retired from SF and went back to producing and directing films. This subchapter will seek to explain this development.

One could argue that SF was the most important thing that happened in Norwegian cinema during World War II. SF was the first significant result of the ambitions of the new policy, and at the same time the primary institutional player regarding the design and implementation of new policies. SF was established as a department subject to KFD. The KFD and SF were not located in the same space, however. The address of SF was Stortingsgata 16, close to the Parliament building. Here, SF was co-located with *Statens filmkontroll* (the State Film Control), *Statens filmtekniske nemnd* (the National Film Technology Board), *Norsk Film AS* (the largest film company in Norway), and the editorial board of *Norsk Kinoblad* (the Norwegian Cinema Magazine, NCM).[31]

SF's mandate was to streamline the production, distribution, and exhibition of films in Norway, in accordance with the new Film Law of 30 April 1941 (Fig. 2.2).[32] From the outset, the KFD and SF did not operate very closely together and the physical distance between their two locations allowed for a perception of independence. Sinding saw SF as far more than just a tool for KFD. His most trusted colleague was bureau chief Birger

Fig. 2.1 Still image from *Tante Pose* (*Aunt Pose*, 1940). (National Library, Oslo)

Rygh Hallan, who was only twenty-eight years old in 1941. Hallan was a trained lawyer and had previously worked mainly with exhibitions and trade fairs.[33] The staff of SF numbered around ten people, including film censors approved by the Ministry. Throughout the German occupation, SF spent 4 million NOK on film support, which was equivalent to twenty-six film productions, according to 1941 costs.[34] The new 1941 Film Law provided Sinding with resources and powers. However, the law itself did not give detailed instructions for the practical execution of policies aimed at streamlining production, distribution, and exhibition—this was left to SF.

The organisation and culture of SF were deeply influenced by Sinding's personal political views and rhetorical style. SF was a key cultural policy instrument in the effort for a National Socialist revolution in Norway, and

Fig. 2.2 Minister President Vidkun Quisling attending the National Film Directorate to see the latest Norwegian *kulturfilm* (cultural film). Front row from the left: Minister of Culture Gulbrand Lunde, Quisling, and Sinding. (*Norwegian Cinema Magazine*, 1942 (3))

as such a part of the NS regime. At the same time, SF was an independent agency that had goals different from the party, the state administration, and other parts of the NS movement. It is doubtful if Sinding would have been appointed to the post had he not joined NS in August 1940. In harnessing the resistance against SF early on, Sinding advocated the demand that people in the film industry join the party. However, this did not mean that Sinding and his bureau chiefs and successors saw themselves as part of the party apparatus. On the contrary, Sinding strived to shake SF free from the grip of the party in order to act responsibly and 'professionally' in cinema matters.[35] It is necessary to distinguish between NS's formal bodies and the other parts of the Norwegian government apparatus—of which SF was obviously a prominent part—as two fundamentally different political spheres.[36] Sinding did not consider himself to be an NS politician, but

a professional.[37] Sinding recruited SF staff himself, and in doing so he was not looking for NS fanatics but competent administrators.

So, what did Sinding's cinema policies look like during his two-year term? Let's begin with the *production policy*. His main goal was to secure national film production and Norwegian control of the means of production. This would have probably been his supreme goal as national film director in any other context; but, in the specific context of a military German occupation, this approach was far from obvious. Sinding had been terrified when he met Schmidt in Oslo in August 1940, and he was aware of developments in the Netherlands and Belgium.[38] HAVP decided that Norwegian national film production could continue if it was controlled directly by SF. On the German side, it was a general belief that Sinding had personally saved the Norwegian film industry from 'Dutch conditions'.[39]

Sinding's ambitions regarding film production went further. He wanted to use SF as a tool to upgrade film as a cultural factor and art form. His work in this area centred on three tasks: to expand the production capacity by establishing a new, highly modern film studio; to ensure stable access to competent actors and other film professionals; and to provide financial guarantees for valuable productions. The first task was made impossible because of the war, since the property that Sinding had designated for the new studio was requisitioned by the Wehrmacht.[40] The second task also proved difficult to complete because of political opposition within the film business. Ultimately, only the third task was achievable, and Sinding did manage to provide resources for the support of 'valuable' films. However, it turned out to be a major challenge to make valuable films when SF lacked legitimacy among most film professionals.

Initially, Sinding declared that production capacity should be increased from four to twelve films annually.[41] In October 1942, SF still believed in achieving at least ten films each year.[42] However, the volume did not increase at all, but remained stable at four until 1944. Sinding was not a propagandist as a film director or producer, but a conservative, who was oriented towards the cultural heritage. He was determined to use Norwegian literature as the basis for film production. His underlying idea was that all arts had to work together to fulfil the social mission of 'promoting the interests of the nation'. Furthermore, he wanted to help increase the status of Norwegian film abroad. However, Sinding met nothing but resistance from Norwegian authors, most of whom refused to sell the film rights to their literary work. This reflected two historical

conditions: the leftist turn of Norwegian cultural life that took place in the 1930s and the widespread view that the film medium was inferior to other art forms.[43] Under any other circumstances, Sinding's mission to expand the production capacity and raise the status of Norwegian film would have likely gained strong support from the film industry itself, but the timing of his efforts was wrong.

SF's *distribution policy* was straightforward: all film companies needed state approval, and all film companies had to operate both as rental and production companies. As a consequence, companies that did not actually intend to contribute to production, lost their approval as a rental agency. This policy did not lead to widespread opposition, though, probably because there always had been fierce competition among the film companies. The number of film companies decreased from more than twenty to five by the end of 1942.[44]

For Sinding, the most pressing policies to address were those aimed at reorganising *film exhibition*, or rather the entire cinema system. Sinding was a strong advocate for the principle of vertical integration, based on the example of the organisation of German cinema. However, Sinding regarded the conditions in Germany more as a distant dream than as a concrete model for the formulation of Norwegian cinema policy. As he himself said after returning from a study trip to Berlin in the spring of 1941: 'It goes without saying that conditions in a world empire are significantly different than in a small country'.[45] His ideal was a model in which there was an 'intimate connection' between film production and the cinema operators. According to Sinding, this was how the system worked in 'all countries where production is strong', whereas in Norway, the municipal cinema system had cut this connection, thereby 'removing the natural basis for production'.[46] He coined the old system 'Bourgeois-Marxist'.

Sinding saw the cinemas as an important arena for the National Socialist revolution in Norway. The cinema managers played an important role in this. High demands were placed on those who were to lead the cinemas on the part of SF. On the one hand, it was expected that the cinema managers understood what major unresolved tasks lay ahead of them in using cinemas to advance the nation's interests, as outlined in NS's political program. On the other hand, the cinema managers had to be able to cope with the adversity and difficulties brought on by the war, and in a way that did not weaken people's confidence in cinemas as an important social arena. The civil community should be nurtured, amusement should run smoothly, and any defence of democratic, liberal civil society that might

manifest itself in the cinemas should be attacked with the appropriate means at the most fundamental level of intervention. Sinding's day-to-day correspondence with small and large cinemas throughout the country shows that at least from the point of view of SF in Oslo, this task was not considered impossible.

However, disappointment was never far away. Due to the influence of the *Innenriksdepartementet* (Ministry of the Interior), SF's control of cinema managers was never as firm as Sinding hoped for. Already in January 1941, the Ministry of the Interior made it clear that they contested the newly created SF.[47] Ever since the establishment of KFD in September 1940, it was expected that a confrontation between the two ministries would arise, because they both had interests in the municipal cinema industry. This conflict is well known and discussed in previous research and literature.[48] The confrontation became acute because Sinding—a man who, for more than twenty years, had proclaimed that the municipal cinema monopoly was the main reason why the country had no significant film production (except for his own films, according to him[49])—happened to be in charge of the reorganisation of Norwegian cinema. The peculiar Norwegian context led to an odd twist in Sinding's approach to cinema policy. Instead of working for the state acquisition of private film enterprises, as was done in Germany, Sinding proposed to privatise municipal cinemas.

On 10 December 1941, the Ministry of Interior declared in a circular that the chief authorities of the municipal cinemas were the cinema boards, local mayors, and county governors, with the Ministry of the Interior as the overarching administrative body. Taking a clear stance against KFD and SF, the Ministry declared: 'To approach other ministries in matters concerning the municipal cinemas therefore has no purpose'.[50]

In cinema matters, SF came to act more as a buffer against arbitrary intervention by NS than as a buffer against the Germans. A typical illustration of this is that Sinding sought to avoid political nepotism and favouritism out of fears that it would lead to arbitrariness. Furthermore, Sinding sought to avoid cooperating too closely with local NS propagandists, who called for a far more radical program in the cinemas.[51] Less surprising is Sinding's attempts to eliminate cinemas with ties to the labour movement.[52]

The *Gleichschaltung* of Norwegian cinema had several dimensions: ideological, political, economic, and cultural. The German-occupying authorities were primarily interested in the ideological and economic aspects, much like the administration in Germany. The political and

cultural dimensions were for the most part left to the Norwegians. Therefore, when it comes to SF's political program in 1941–1942, there was barely any top-down German-Norwegian dynamic whatsoever. The policies were created by Sinding and his staff, with Minister Lunde as a rather distant, but supportive figure.[53] Opposition to the policies of SF during Sinding's reign came from various sides: from more radical parts of NS, from the Ministry of the Interior, from local German commandants of the Wehrmacht—who demanded to use the cinemas for their soldiers—and, in no small part, from audiences.

For Sinding, it was paramount that SF's attempt at reorganising Norwegian cinema did not become a source of antagonism and ridicule at the expense of SF and himself. His worst fear was to lose face in the eyes of the Germans, who he strove to impress. Therefore, the politics of SF was always carried out with an almost exquisite sensitivity to propaganda backlash. Fear of sabotage against the reorganisation of cinema reigned from the first moment.[54] The audiences had the power to initiate cinema strikes and boycott actions. The archives of SF are a rich source of what could be called the 'hidden' NS discourse about cinema. Behind the scenes, audiences and individual moviegoers were given tremendous influence, as opposed to how they were mentioned in the public discourse, where the individual's need to air his or her opinion was ridiculed.[55] In a personal letter to Minister Lunde in April 1941, Sinding stated that he was seriously concerned about the impact of strike and boycott actions with regard to future film production.[56] In August 1941, SF instructed the cinemas in Oslo not to advertise German newsreels, neither in the press nor outside the cinemas, for fear of antagonistic demonstrations.[57]

Gleichschaltung was not a secret, not a plan B and not something metaphysical. Everything happened in the open for everyone to see, and the censored Norwegian press was an important messenger and thereby also a part of the message. Norwegian cinema politics cannot be understood as detached from the National Socialist ideology inherent in the *Gleichschaltung* of the cultural field. The rhetoric of NCM, as well as the prose and speeches of Sinding and Minister Lunde's, display key elements of National Socialist discourse: worship of the *Führer*; racism; anti-Semitism; anti-democratic attitudes; the legitimization of violence, imprisonment, and executions; as well as the notion of a future, peaceful Germanic empire after the final victory.[58]

It was to a large extent the German activities in 1940, prior to Sinding's entry on the scene, that led to the opposition against SF from early 1941.

This resistance was from the outset explicitly expressed as 'emergency protection' against German war economic goals.[59] Sinding became the personification of 'unnational' collaboration and a scapegoat. In February 1941, the German Security Police confiscated a poster hanging on the front door of a restaurant in Oslo with the following text, 'We want: Aamodt back, Sinding away, *Hirden* [paramilitary unit within NS] and the Germans to pay the full price.'[60] This message pinpointed two issues of frustration: the German dismissal of Kristoffer Aamot as cinema director in Oslo, and the fact that Wehrmacht and NS soldiers only paid half the price for cinema tickets.

Sinding carefully staged his retirement from SF. He was worried that his departure from SF would seem like a retreat. Therefore, it was presented as part of a successful plan. In an interview in NCM, he accentuated that his major challenge as director of SF already was completed, namely to install SF as 'a bulwark for our national film'.[61]

There is reason to believe that Sinding thought of his SF position as temporary all along. We can identify three reasons that precipitated his official retirement on 21 December 1942. First, the resistance he had experienced both personally and professionally, which were quite shattering to his political visions. Second, the war posed serious obstacles to the achievement of his lofty goals. Finally, he burnt with the desire to make more films—and on some level, he must have thought that he could make better use of his competencies as a film director than as a policymaker.

From 1943 to May 1945: Discouragement and Desperation

As we shall see, nothing about Sinding's circumstances improved after 1942. The opposition against him did not vanish even after withdrawing from the limelight and adopting a more low-profile role as 'just' a filmmaker. From the perspective of NS, the war did not develop in a positive direction at all. Plus, Sinding's desire to make more films was quickly marred by bitter experiences.

From January 1943, SF had to manage without Sinding and Sinding had to manage without SF (Fig. 2.3). I will concentrate on Sinding's two roles as film director and film politician, although it should be briefly mentioned that Sinding also had a career as film producer. He was personally involved in two film companies during the war: *A/S Merkur-Film* and *A/S*

Efi-Film. *A/S Merkur-Film* was one of the most successful companies from the late 1930s and produced all of Sinding's most popular films, including *Aunt Pose* and *Kjærlighet og vennskap* (*Love and Friendship*, 1941). Sinding temporarily withdrew from *Merkur*, however, when he took over as SF director. In 1941, *Merkur* produced the light comedy *Den forsvundne pølsemaker* (*The Missing Sausage-Maker*), which was a huge success during the occupation years and beyond. Sinding, though, loathed this film. In NCM, 'sausage-maker substance' even became a negative tag for unwanted films.[62] In late 1942, when Sinding prepared for his return to making films, *Merkur* made it clear they didn't want him back. But Sinding succeeded in taking over another company, *A/S Efi-Film*, which produced his next films.[63]

There was an entirely new context for making films in 1943, compared to 1941–1942. A boycott within the film business had begun, whereby several directors abstained from making more films and the same went for a lot of actors, photographers, film composers, production designers, and

Fra den strålende morsomme lystspillfilm
Kjærlighet og Vennskap
Med SONJA WIGERT – PER AABEL og
GEORG LØKKEBERG
Regi: LEIF SINDING

Fig. 2.3 Poster with a still image from *Kjærlighet og vennskap* (*Love and Friendship*, 1941) with the actors Per Aabel and Sonja Wigert. (National Library, Oslo)

so on. It was now considered unseemly to participate in national film productions.[64] As far back as late 1940, moviegoers had occasionally boycotted certain films or movie theatres for a variety of reasons. Starting in 1943, this mode of everyday resistance was particularly focused on boycotting Norwegian premiere films with strong ties to SF and the NS regime. Two film directors were targeted in particular: Leif Sinding and Walter Fyrst (1901–1993).

Fyrst was a film professional, advertising man, and propagandist. He was a member of NS from the time of its inception in 1933 and became the party's first propaganda chief. Fyrst made three feature films during World War II: the NS epic *Unge viljer* (*Young Wills*, 1943), the national romantic melodrama *Brudekronen* (*The Bridal Crown*, 1944), and the 'reindeer-western' *Villmarkens lov* (*Law of the Wilderness*, 1944). The former was a film about the NS movement itself, and the only explicitly National Socialist feature film made in Norway. All three films were largely boycotted throughout the country. *The Bridal Crown* in particular was a complete failure, with only half-sold houses already on its opening day.[65] This had nothing to do with the content of the film itself but was entirely a reaction against the man behind it.

The first project Sinding embarked on after he returned to the director's chair in 1943 was based on a play by Norwegian writer Johan Bojer. The completed film bore the lyrical title *Sangen til livet* (*The Song of Life*, 1943). Sinding unabashedly applied to SF for the top risk-guarantee of up to 200,000 NOK for any loss, claiming that his film met the specific criteria for 'artistically valuable films'.[66] SF, now led by Hallan, limited the guarantee to a loss of up to 60,000 NOK. Sinding was terrified that audiences would turn their backs on the film—and he was right. Production costs totalled around 230,000 NOK, and, as of November 1943, the loss was 190,000 NOK. According to Sinding, this economic disaster was solely due to 'political sabotage and boycott'. On the difficulties of being a cursed filmmaker, he wrote:

> When you mix politics into ordinary artistic entertainment film, then all logic and meaning are gone, and the whole thing is in vain.[67]

Sinding had to make the heavy decision to halt all further leasing of the film, since it made no sense, he thought, 'to run the film on disastrous minimum revenue'.[68] The experience with *The Song of Life* had the consequence that both SF and KFD considered lowering the level of ambition

when it came to the scale of Norwegian film production for the duration of the war. 'No director with respect for his name and his art will voluntarily make a film under these conditions', Sinding summarised one year after the failure of *The Song of Life* (Fig. 2.4).[69]

Nevertheless, he did not surrender and made yet another attempt. Sinding's last film project during the occupation years was based on a story by Norwegian author Gabriel Scott titled *Josefa*. The film was never realized, though. Sinding complained about everything, not least about the poor performances of the actors, which was a matter of those happened to be available, and willing to participate in a Sinding film.[70]

Sinding and Fyrst did not have much in common, other than their ties to the NS regime. When it came to filmmaking and views on film as propaganda, they were antagonists. This is best illustrated by examining how Sinding treated Fyrst's films in his role as politician. *Young Wills* was produced when Sinding still was director of SF. He strongly warned against

Fig. 2.4 Behind the scenes of *Sangen til livet* (*The Song of Life*, 1943). Sinding (at centre) as attentive director. (National Library, Oslo)

giving this film ordinary cinema distribution. Sinding felt that Norwegian moviegoers were not ready for open NS propaganda. He sent long letters to Lunde on two occasions in which he 'most severely' protested and warned against *Young Wills*. Sinding was a supporter of subtle, not overt, Nazi propaganda:

> If Mr Fyrst's film is going to hit the cinemas in the current difficult political conditions, this means that the cinemas will be destroyed immediately, as a new film strike could hardly be avoided.[71]

When Fyrst's *The Bridal Crown* was released in Norway in 1944, Sinding held a different position, in his role as film representative in the Arts Council. In a meeting in October, Fyrst's newest film became the topic of discussion. Several of the members felt the movie was completely unsuccessful. Sinding, on the one hand, tried to act as a loyal colleague, while at the same time letting it shine through that he considered Fyrst to lack both 'artistic qualifications' and sufficient experience. At the same meeting, Minister Fuglesang, the chairman of the Arts Council, stated that quality was more important than quantity in Norwegian film production; it was better to wait and see.[72] Sinding supported Fuglesang in this. Sinding's somewhat surprising new stance was that it was 'without any significance whether few or many films are made under these conditions'.[73]

The discussion in the Arts Council took place during a hectic time when the sun was going down on the NS regime, so to speak, and it was desperately trying to realise one of the most ambitious political projects of the occupation, namely the corporate *Rikstinget* (*National Parliament*), which eventually was supposed to replace the elected, democratic *Stortinget* (the Parliament of Norway). As part of this process, a committee had prepared proposals for the future organisation of cultural life with a governing *Kulturting* (reminiscent of the German *Reichskulturkammer* [Reich Cultural Chamber]) at the top, a more fast-paced Arts Council, new trade unions, and new subordinate national associations. These proposals were presented in Trondheim in the summer of 1944 but were not adopted. For Leif Sinding, who was the film representative in the Arts Council, it must have been extremely embarrassing that the film industry was mocked as an example of a sector that really needed a cultural-political overhaul after three and a half years under the direction of SF.

The relationship between Sinding and Fyrst can be understood as reflective of an inherent tension in the National Socialist movement between conservatism and revolutionary ideas. Historian David Welch aptly describes this tension as a 'precarious alliance'.[74] Sinding was basically a national romantic. Fyrst, to the contrary, was a seeking and rootless type, who was in political motion throughout his life. He had toyed with Communism in the 1920s; then he fell for National Socialism, lost faith, and then found it again.[75] He had been eager for propagandistic film production in Norway, only to abandon this project completely in 1944 and embark on pure entertainment films. As such, Sinding and Fyrst are, therefore, characteristic of the existential questions that NS faced. Should the party go all-in for revolution here and now (Fyrst's position), aim for incremental reforms (Sinding's initial position), or postpone the project to an uncertain future (Sinding's position from 1943)?

The tension between conservatism and revolutionary ideas can also explain different views on filmmaking as an artistic process. For the romantic Sinding, the ideal was to imitate the great masters, while the driving force for Fyrst was to explore new possibilities in film as a medium and genre. All of Sinding's films resemble one another. Fyrst's creative output is more experimental and ranges from silent film, commercials, educational and propaganda films to short and feature films.

To be able to assess Sinding's agency in the period from 1943 to 1945, we need to state some facts about the context. First, as it turned out, film was not a privileged area of policy in occupied Norway, and constantly had to fight for access to scarce resources. Rivalry within the Norwegian NS regime was more devastating than the relationship towards the German-occupying power. Ideas alone were not enough to reorganise film in Norway; the material basis simply did not exist. The fact that money was allocated in the state budget helped little when eventually it was not possible to secure basic materials like raw film for production, cleaning equipment for laboratory use, velvet ribbons for protecting film reels, food, fuel, and travel permits for production staff when making films on location, fuel for heating the cinemas, props of all kinds, and so on. KFD was not a strong supporter of SF in cinema issues, especially not during the term of Minister Rolf Fuglesang (1942–45). Second, cooperation among the cultural propagandists in HAVP was not particularly solid. Sinding and his SF successors were ideologically in line with German and Norwegian National Socialists. Nevertheless, it is difficult to spot areas where German and Norwegian film authorities cooperated systematically and confidentially.

Müller-Scheld remained a distant authority and very rarely interfered with SF. Norwegian film authorities supported creating a European film market under German leadership and engaged in international cultural cooperation in the belief that it was in the interests of Norwegian film. And third, Norwegian cinema politics did not operate in a vacuum, but was framed, adjusted, and negotiated within the wider context of a propaganda war. From 1941 to 1942, Sinding played the role of frontman for the reorganisation of Norwegian cinema. To his merit did he manage to ensure control of the national film production. From 1943 on, though, he was not able to achieve anything of value as a film politician and film director.

From 1945 to 1956: Atonement

The end of the war resulted in a political fall for Leif Sinding, who was arrested and sentenced as traitor to four years of forced labour. This was only to be expected, and Sinding's 'fall' did not begin in May 1945, but already in 1940–1941 when he made himself available to the occupying power and NS as policymaker. After his release, it did not take long before he was part of the Norwegian film business yet again, eager to pursue new ideas and collaborative projects with former colleagues, many of whom had been staunch political opponents during the occupation years.

Was Sinding's fall made easier because of the lack of national honour and prestige attached to film, in comparison to other arts? Media historian Hans Fredrik Dahl and art sociologist Dag Solhjell suggest that those who were active in art forms that were most closely tied to national pride—and thereby international accolade—lost their honour the most, even when they had committed small 'errors'.[76] An important prerequisite for Sinding's re-entry into the film business after the war was the fact that there was no extrajudicial *oppgjør* (purge) of those who had 'failed' within the cinema business. In fact, film was the only art form that didn't have any *oppgjør* after 1945, which were carried out by associations that organised professionals within their respective fields, such as composers, musicians, visual artists, authors, performing artists, and so on. Typical punishments were exclusion, confiscation of income, and a professional ban. One explanation for the lack of *oppgjør* within the cinema business is the fact that there still were no member organisations for film directors, producers, actors, or other film professionals in Norway. Another matter of crucial importance in Sinding's case is that he had not done anything to harm or destroy Norwegian cinema. He was no iconoclast. In fact, several

aspects of SF's cinema policy were continued after 1945. What was abandoned for good were the German policies.

In the beginning of the 1950s, Sinding was apparently back in business—but not quite. *Selkvinnen* (*The Seal Woman*, 1953) was the first film project he was involved in after 1945, for which he was credited as writer and production manager only, not as director. The reception was consistently negative. In several reviews, the new state support system of 1950 became an issue. In this system, it was left up to the *Statens Filmråd* (National Film Council) to decide whether a film should get state funding. Until 1953, all films had managed to pass the test. Then, in December 1953, one month after the premiere of *The Seal Woman*, the National Film Council decided that this film should not get state support. Sinding did not accept this decision and went to court—but ultimately lost. Undoubtedly, the fact that Sinding's name was attached to the film played a role, but it was not limited to this. Nevertheless, it is somewhat ironic that Sinding's own film project was the first film not to make the cut after the implementation of a state funding system which to some extent was conceptionally conceived by Sinding himself during the war.

As suggested by author, journalist, and former resistance fighter Sigurd Evensmo:

> Sinding himself hardly ever doubted that the decision of the National Film Council was revenge for his Nazi past, a disguised additional sentence to the judicial sentence of four years of forced labour he had received in December 1950.[77]

Evensmo made no attempt to be neutral; 'this indeed was a new low', he wrote about the film. Film scholar Gunnar Iversen expresses a similar opinion of the film: 'It was simply *too* bad'.[78]

Soon afterwards, a new transitional order was introduced, which automatically provided funding for all films. This also applied for Sinding's next film and the first he directed on his own after the war, *Heksenetter* (*Witch Nights*, 1954). Once again, the reception was consistently negative. In *Aftenposten* (*The Evening Mail*), the film was labelled as 'nonsense'.[79] It did not go any better with his last film, *Gylne ungdom* (*Golden Youth*, 1956) (Fig. 2.5).

It is interesting to note who Sinding collaborated with on his three post-war productions. He was joined by respected and established actors and other film professionals who had contributed to the period's most

GYLNE UNGDOM
URDA ARNEBERG ☆ ODD BORG
☆ TOM TELLEFSEN
RANDI BRÆNNE • TURID HAALAND • ELLA HVAL •
GRETEULL FRIES • TORE FOSS • JOACHIM CALMEYER •
HENRIK ANKER STEEN • WILLIE HOEL • EGIL HJORTH-JENSSEN
• DAN FOSSE • PER ULLO STENBERG •
MISS MARY ANDERSON • PER ASPLIN • BERIT KJELLANDER •
ELITE-FILM

Fig. 2.5 Poster for Sinding's last film, *Gylne ungdom* (*Golden Youth*, 1956). His name is omitted from the poster. (National Library, Oslo)

popular films, many of which actually dealt directly with the years of occupation.[80] The themes of Sinding's two first post-war films also dealt with World War II as a national trauma, but more indirectly. *The Seal Woman* tells the story about a resistance fighter in the Danish-occupied Faroe Islands in the eighteenth century; *Witch Nights* deals with the guilt complex of a former general, who is haunted by his selfishly motivated actions during 'The Great War'; while *Golden Youth* is a kind of Norwegian counterpart to *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955). The theme of *Witch Nights* resembles that of Arne Skouen's acclaimed *Kalde spor* (*Cold Tracks*, 1962). But Sinding did not receive any positive attention or encouragement for his work—so, exhausted and disillusioned by the adversity, he gave up directing films in 1956. The first two post-war films remain overlooked, despite being interesting examples of artistic processing of a traumatic past. Similarly, *Golden Youth* was completely ignored; perhaps if it were made by another director, it could have been a Norwegian film classic.

Legacy (1956 Until Today): The Crafting of a Narrative

Some have claimed that Sinding became a victim of the politics of remembrance, and for this reason Sinding is actively forgotten in Norwegian film history.[81] I don't believe this to be true. Sinding did manage to secure his reputation as film director for posterity. Since the early 1970s, it has been a Christmas tradition in Norway to show Sinding's *Aunt Pose* on national television. The durability of *Aunt Pose* helped his reputation, but the most important factor was Sinding's own efforts as a narrator of film history. Sinding may have been a filmmaker at heart, but the pen was his true weapon. Throughout his career he wrote numerous articles, lectures, and notes on film and film history, often polemical and pointed in form. Here, the war years were no exception. In 1972, Sinding published his memoirs, *En filmsaga* (*A Film Saga*).[82] I see Sinding's own assessment of his role as a film pioneer in this autobiography as the narrative foundation for the conception of Sinding as a film artist that persists to this day.

Some explanations for this are required. Most importantly, Sinding continued to make films after the war. This is a key point, even though these films slipped into oblivion, Sinding's *earlier films* have not been forgotten. Sinding's fall was a political reality. If the travesty of *The Song of Life* and the unfinished *Josefa* had remained his last film projects, it is not

unlikely that his entire work would have been subject to more condemnation than recognition after 1945. At least it seems that Sinding himself thought along those lines. Norway's post-war cultural politics required the narrative of a pre-war 'Golden Age' of Norwegian film, and Sinding was part of that heritage. The Norwegian film business was a small community, and it was all being reinvented after the war. This also helped Sinding get back into the game, even though he did not quite manage to find his place. Also, he had not compromised himself by making outrageous Nazi propaganda films à la Veit Harlan; and he had not been too arbitrary or too disposed to nepotism in his capacity as film politician and official. Undoubtedly, his comeback would have been more difficult if he had used his position as NS official to drive competitors out of the industry due to political considerations or German pressure. Furthermore, film was not deemed an honourable art form. Here, a comparison with Sinding's 'colleague' in the National Theatre Directorate is quite illustrative. Author and journalist Finn Halvorsen tried to reorganise Norwegian theatre in the way Sinding attempted to reorganise cinema. They both had political aspirations and artistic ambitions of their own. After the war, Halvorsen was ostracised, Sinding was not.[83]

His anti-Semitism and general anti-democratic attitudes aside, Sinding's political project was not particularly National Socialist in origin or character. Other film scholars and film historians have occasionally evaluated Sinding quite similarly on this point, either directly or indirectly. For instance, the deregulation measures of the 1950s, which had been promoted by Sinding in the 1940s, are commonly described by film scholars and film historians as necessary and long-awaited.[84] Also, as it happened, his war-time anti-Semitism was not regarded as appalling or too blameworthy in the Norwegian post-war society, which is an unpleasant truth.[85]

Conclusion

In summary, the two main goals of this chapter are to analyse Sinding as a mediator of war-time cinema politics in occupied Norway and to examine the circumstances surrounding his re-entry into Norwegian cultural life after his political downfall. Sinding's role as mediator had three dimensions. First, this is a case of mediation understood as *negotiation*. Sinding had to mediate between pressure, demands, and expectations from both German and Norwegian authorities, from other parts of the NS movement, from the cinema industry, as well as from the suppressed civil society

and moviegoers. Because there was no coherent German policy to be carried out by well-organised bodies, continuous negotiations were required. Second, Sinding's role as mediator was about him being the *conveyor* of *Gleichschaltung* for Norwegian cinema. He was given—but also willingly assumed—the role as the leading figure of cinema's new order, thus becoming the symbol of everything connected with cinema politics in occupied Norway. Third, Sinding's mediation involved the *creation* of new policies. He was visionary, creative, and resourceful—all of which were necessary to play the role as *Reichsfilmführer* in Norway, as he was nicknamed in underground newspapers during the occupation (with reference to the analogous top position in Germany).[86]

The main reason why it was possible for Sinding to re-enter cultural life after the war was rooted precisely in the way he had carried out his tasks as mediator of cinema politics during the war. To a certain extent, he had been pursuing the right policies at the wrong time. Continuities between wartime and post-war cinema politics in Norway abound.[87] Sinding first became known in film circles after founding the film magazine *Hero and Villain* when he was in his twenties. It is hard not to read the title somewhat prophetic. Much could be said about Sinding as politician and artist, but one thing is certain: he was not afraid of becoming a villain in the eyes of most people in his attempt to become a hero in his own mind.

Notes

1. In order to facilitate reading, abbreviations of institutions in Norway are marked in bold at the first mention.
2. 'NS' in the Norwegian context always refers to Vidkun Quisling's *Nasjonal Samling* as political party and movement.
3. National Archives Oslo (hereafter NA), Treason case 4387/Oslo against L. Sinding.
4. Dahl, H.F., Gripsrud, J., Iversen, I., Skretting, K. & B. Sørenssen (1996) *Kinoens mørke, fjernsynets lys. Levende bilder i Norge gjennom hundre år*. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, pp. 150–155; Iversen, G. (2011) *Norsk filmhistorie. Spillefilmen 1911–2011*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, pp. 101–103.
5. For an extensive study of Norwegian cinema during World War II, see Hagen, T.V.H. (2018) *Folkefellesskap, forlystelse og hverdagsmotstand. Kino i Norge 1940–1945*. PhD dissertation. University of Agder.

6. Kleinhans, B. (2004) Volksgemeinschaft, in *Zukunft braucht Erinnerung. Das Online-Portal zu den historischen Themen unserer Zeit*. [http://www.zukunft-braucht-erinnerung.de/volksgemeinschaft/].
7. Welch, D. (2001) *Propaganda and the German Cinema 1933–1945*. London & New York: I.B. Tauris, p. 8; cf. p. 30, note 11.
8. Jowett, G.S. & V. O'Donnell (2006) *Propaganda and Persuasion*. Thousand Oaks, CA, London & New Dehli: Sage Publications, p. 1.
9. [Oslo Cinematographs] (1951) *Oslo Kinematografer 25 år, 1926–1951*, p. 95. A curiosity: In 1939, Oslo's cinema director Kristoffer Aamot predicted that posterity would consider Norwegian Gustav Vigeland a greater sculptor than Michelangelo. Kjeldstadli, K. (1990) *Den delte byen. Fra 1900 til 1948*, vol. 4 in *Oslo bys historie*. Oslo: Cappelen, p. 247.
10. *Statistisk sentralbyrå* (Statistics Norway), Historical Statistics 1994. There are different estimates in the sources. A note made by SF bureau chief Birger Rygh Hallan in 1942 shows that in 1939 there were 270 cinemas in Norway, of which 107 were municipal, 68 private, and 95 run by associations. NA, SF, Fdc L0002, PM dated 2 October 1942. In the proposal for a new Film Act in 1944, it was assumed that there were 320 cinemas in the country, of which 116 were municipal. NA, SF, Fdc L0001. According to a German source, the municipal cinemas' share of the total attendance in 1940 was 81 per cent. NA, Reich Commissariat, Press Department.
11. National Library Oslo, Archive of *Kommunale kinematografers landsforbund* (Municipal Cinematographs Association, KKL).
12. Even in the relatively populous parts of south-eastern Norway, such travelling companies flourished. This part of the Norwegian cinema history is virtually unexplored.
13. Dahl et al. (1996).
14. Film titles that consist of proper names will not be translated into English. In the case of *The Gypsy*, the word used in the original title was a common Norwegian term for travellers, a national minority.
15. National Library Oslo, KKL, Circular 22 July 1939.
16. Hagen, T.V.H. (2016) Nordmenn i fangenskap 1940–1945, in *Norgeshistorie.no* (University of Oslo). [https://www.norgeshistorie.no/andre-verdenskrig/1758-nordmenn-i-fangenskap-1940-1945.html].
17. Rosendahl, B.T. (2017) *Seafarers or war sailors? The ambiguities of ensuring seafarers' services in times of war in the case of the Norwegian merchant fleet during the Second World War*. PhD dissertation. University of Agder.
18. Müller and Müller-Scheld are more closely described in another chapter in this book.
19. Hagen (2018), pp. 75–78, 305–310.
20. NA, Treason case 4387/Oslo against L. Sinding, Sinding's testimony 15 April 1946. Cf. Smogeli, S.O. (2015) *Leif Sinding—fra filmpioner til*

landssviker. Statens Filmdirektorat og nyordningen av norsk filmpolitikk under okkupasjonen sett i lys av filmregissør Leif Sinding 1940–1945. MA thesis in history. University of Oslo, p. 40.

21. NA, Treason case 4387/Oslo against L. Sinding, Sinding's testimony 15 April 1946.
22. Sinding's testimony 15 April 1946.
23. Evensmo, S. (1992) *Det store tivoli. Film og kino i Norge*. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, pp. 223–224; Disen, O.H.P. (1997) *Den store illusjonen. Filmbyråenes historie*. Oslo: Norske Filmbyråers Forening, p. 127; Sørenssen, B. (2001) Direktorat og direktiv: kampen om filmen i den norske NS-administrasjonen, p. 30 in Iversen, G. (ed.) *Krigsbilder*, KUBE 3; Hanche, Ø. (2001) Krig i kulissene: filmpolitikk i Norge under den andre verdenskrig, pp. 47–48 in Iversen (2001); Smogeli (2015), p. 4. Vande Winkel et al. (2012) see the establishment of SF as a prophylactic move on the part of Reich Commissioner Terboven to ensure autonomy in Norwegian cultural issues at the expense of RMVP in Berlin. See Vande Winkel, R., Jönsson, M., Sørensen, L.-M. & B. Sørenssen (2012), German film distribution in Scandinavia during World War II, p. 269 in *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema*, 2 (3). Martin Moll, for his part, claims that SF originated on NS's initiative, but that it served German interests. See Moll, M. (1998) Zwischen Weimarer Klassik und nordischem Mythos: NS-Kulturpropaganda in Norwegen (1940–1945), p. 217 in Benz, W., Otto, G. & A. Weismann (eds.) *Kultur—Propaganda—Öffentlichkeit. Intentionen deutscher Besatzungspolitik und Reaktionen auf die Okkupation*. Berlin: Metropol Verlag.
24. The source to this interpretation is Gustav W. Boo, who was the manager of *Norsk Film AS* during the war. He produced an eighteen-page report dated 6.10.1945 entitled 'The Norwegian Film Directorate's "new arrangement" of film production and purchase of foreign films'. Cf. Hanche (2001), p. 47. In the words of Sigurd Evensmo, author of the first authoritative history of cinema in Norway (1967): 'Early in 1940, Sinding went to Müller-Scheld in the *Reichskommissariat* and initiated an intimate and productive collaboration that lasted throughout the occupation.' Evensmo (1992), p. 228.
25. The Security Service (SD) of the German Security Police (SiPo) played an important role in supervising and analysing the conditions of cultural life in occupied Norway. In their secret intelligence reports, *Meldungen aus Norwegen* (Reports from Norway), there is rich material concerning cinema, film preferences, and incidents in the movie theatres. Cf. Hagen (2018), pp. 316–323. However, this topic is not a part of the current chapter.

26. Loock, H.-D. (1970) *Quisling, Rosenberg und Terboven. Zur Vorgeschichte und Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Revolution in Norwegen*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, p. 456. Cited in Moll (1998), p. 190.
27. Hagen (2018), pp. 228–233.
28. Martin, B.G. (2016) *The Nazi-Fascist new order for European culture*. Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press.
29. Hagen (2018), pp. 290–293.
30. Helseth, T. (2000) *Filmrevy som propaganda. Den norske filmrevyen 1941–1945*. Doctoral dissertation. University of Oslo, p. 53.
31. NA, SF, Fda L0003-L0004.
32. NA, SF, Fda L0003. Formally, this was a *forordning* (regulation), not a law.
33. *Norwegian Cinema Magazine*, 1943 (1).
34. Hagen (2018), p. 173.
35. Hagen (2018), pp. 243–245.
36. Bjørn Sørenssen sees this differently. He argues that the 'betrayal problem' must always be an 'overall historical point of view' in studies of Norwegian cinema politics. Sørenssen (2001), p. 43.
37. Anniversary interview with National Film Director Leif Sinding, p. 11 in *Norwegian Cinema Magazine*, 1942 (2).
38. Vande Winkel, R. & D. Welch (eds.) (2011) *Cinema and the Swastika. The International Expansion of Third Reich Cinema*. Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan. The contributions on Belgium (pp. 72–84) and the Netherlands (pp. 207–219) are written by Roel Vande Winkel and Ingo Schiweck respectively.
39. NA, Treason case 4387/Oslo against L. Sinding, G.W. Müller's testimony 16 June 1948.
40. NA, SF, Fdc L0004, KFD to SF 13 May 1944.
41. *Norwegian Cinema Magazine*, 1941 (1), p. 5.
42. RA, SF, Fda L0002, PM from B. Rygh Hallan to A. Whist 6 October 1942.
43. Hans Fredrik Dahl and Tore Helseth have previously pointed out that many artists and cultural workers who joined NS during the occupation had belonged to 'the losing side' in the 1930s cultural struggles, when cultural life in Norway underwent a radicalisation. Dahl, H.F. & T. Helseth (2006) *To knurrende løver. Kulturpolitikkens historie 1814–2014*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, pp. 190–191.
44. Hagen (2018), p. 82.
45. Leif Sinding back from study trip to Berlin, p. 12 in *Norwegian Cinema Magazine*, 1941 (2).
46. Norwegian film and the future, p. 5 in *Norwegian Cinema Magazine*, 1941 (5).
47. Smogeli (2015), p. 51; Hagen (2018), p. 155.

48. Evensmo (1992), pp. 231–234; Disen (1997), p. 132; Sørenssen (2001), pp. 32–34; Hanche (2001), pp. 70–72.
49. For example: *Norwegian Cinema Magazine*, 1942 (3).
50. National Library Oslo, KKL, Circular from the Ministry of the Interior, 10 December 1941.
51. Hagen (2018), p. 244.
52. Hagen (2018), p. 135.
53. Hagen (2018), pp. 120, 234–235, 242.
54. Serious words, p. 12 in *Norwegian Cinema Magazine*, 1942 (5).
55. National Library Oslo, KKL, *Adresseavisen* (*The Address Paper*), 14 January 1941.
56. NA, SF, PM from L. Sinding to G. Lunde 28 April 1941.
57. NA, SF, Fda L0004, SF to KFD 22 August 1941.
58. See for example: Lunde, G. (1941–1943). *Kampen for Norge. Foredrag og artikler*, 3 vol.; Sinding, L. (1943) Norsk film i støpeskjeen, in Østbye, H.N. (ed.) *Nasjonalverket Det nye Norge*, vol. 2, Oslo; Sinding, L. (1942) Norsk film og framtiden, in *Gjallarhorn*, 1942 (3), pp. 31–36.
59. Hagen (2018), p. 229.
60. Cited from Disen (1997), p. 134.
61. *Norwegian Cinema Magazine*, 1943 (1), p. 7.
62. The dangerous game, p. 20 in *Norwegian Cinema Magazine*, 1942 (2).
63. Disen (1997), pp. 140–143.
64. Except for one film each by Rasmus Breistein and Toralf Sandø, in 1943 and 1944 respectively, all films from 1943 onwards were directed by film-makers with close ties to SF.
65. NA, SF, Fda L0004, *Centrum Film AS* to KFD 26 November 1944.
66. Corresponds to approx. 500,000 Euro in today's monetary value.
67. NA, SF, Fdd L0001, *Efi Production* to SF 23 November 1943.
68. NA, SF, Fdd L0001, *The Song of Life*, March–October 1943.
69. NA, SF, Fdc L0002, L. Sinding to SF 16 November 1944.
70. NA, SF, Fdd L0001, *Josefa*.
71. NA, SF, L. Sinding to Minister G. Lunde, 30 June 1942. Cf. Dahl et al. (1996), pp. 182–183.
72. NA, SF, Fdc L0004, L. Sinding to SF, 18 October 1944.
73. Hagen (2018), pp. 258–259.
74. Welch, D. (2001), p. 267.
75. About his first political crush, Fyrst recalls in his memoirs: 'I understood Carsten's [Aasebøe] demand for a fairer society and joined the youth union on the spot: Communism had to be right. Everyone should be equal. No one should have advantages over others.' Fyrst, W. (1981) *My Path*. Oslo: Aschehoug, p. 9.

76. Dahl, H.F. & D. Solhjell (2013) *'… men viktigst er æren.' Oppgjøret blant kunstnerne etter 1945*. Oslo: Pax Forlag, pp. 56–57.
77. Evensmo (1992), p. 305.
78. Evensmo (1992), p. 305; Iversen (2011), p. 160.
79. Lunde, R. (24 August 1954) in *The Evening Mail*.
80. Actors like Lauritz Falk, Jack Fjeldstad, Joachim Holst-Jensen, Fridtjof Mjøen and Ingerid Vardund, composer Gunnar Sønstevold and cinematographer Ragnar Sørensen contributed to several so-called *occupational dramas*. Notable examples are Arne Skouen's *Nødlanding* (*Emergency landing*, 1952) and *Ni liv* (*Nine lives*, 1957), and Sigval Maartmann-Moe's *I slik en natt* (*In Such a Night*, 1958).
81. Dahl & Solhjell (2013), p. 237; Smogeli (2015), p. 5.
82. Sinding, L. (1972) *En filmsaga. Fra norsk filmkunsts begynnelse—stumfilmårene som jeg så og opplevet dem*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1972.
83. Lund-Iversen, C.L. (2016) *Ordets tjener og sviker. Forfatteren, kritikeren og nazisten Finn Halvorsen*. Kristiansand: Portal forlag.
84. See for example Iversen (2011), pp. 135, 155–157; Dahl et al. (1996), p. 185.
85. For some examples of Sinding's anti-Semitic rhetoric, see Hagen (2018), pp. 185–188.
86. Even Sigurd Evenmo mocks Sinding by calling him *Riksfilmfører* in his reference work on Norwegian film history, originally written in 1967. Cf. Evensmo (1992), p. 225.
87. Hagen (2018), pp. 486–487.

CHAPTER 3

Goebbels' Propagandists at Work: From Training the Film Elite at Home to Film Policy in Occupied Norway

Thomas V. H. Hagen and Tobias Hochscherf

Introduction

Film ranked highly among the National Socialists' preferred media for propaganda. As early as 1930, the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Workers Party, NSDAP) had established a department devoted to the medium in order to win the hearts and minds of people for their cause. In addition to cinema's role as a means of mass persuasion, the film industry also carried significant economic value, not least for its potential to bring in much-needed foreign

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P. Skopal, R. Vande Winkel (eds.), *Film Professionals in Nazi-Occupied Europe*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61634-2_3

currencies. Following the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, institutions such as the *Reichsfilmkammer* (Reich Film Chamber, RFK) and the film department at the *Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* (Reich Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, RMVP) led by Joseph Goebbels were involved in matters concerning audiovisual media. As Eric Rentschler puts it in his study of the legacy of cinema under National Socialism: 'If the Nazis were movie mad, then the Third Reich was movie made'.[1]

Film—as with other attempts to use cultural and educational policy to consolidate German leadership in Europe—also played an important part in the occupation of Norway. The Wehrmacht invaded Norway on 9 April 1940 despite the country's neutral status, and the ensuing German occupation lasted until the unconditional surrender of the Third Reich on 8 May 1945. After forcing the Norwegian King and the democratically elected government into exile, the Third Reich initially accepted the Norwegian fascist Vidkun Quisling, leader of the small party *Nasjonal Samling* (National Rally), as the country's new head of state. Quisling's 'government of national unity', however, struggled to gain significant support among the Norwegian public. Civil administration was thus handed over to *Reichskommissar* (Reich Commissioner) Josef Terboven, while the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (High Command of the Armed Forces) remained in charge of the approximately 300,000 German troops stationed in Norway. Having established his power, Terboven installed a Norwegian puppet government with Quisling as the new Minister President on 1 February 1942, whereby the *Reichskommissariat* (Reich Commissariat) under Terboven's command was the actual centre of power.[2]

Using Martin Moll's and Thomas V.H. Hagen's research as a point of departure, we seek to ascertain the strategic relevance of Norway and consider how German ambitions changed from 1940 to the end of war.[3] In so doing, we argue that National Socialist film policy was far less coherent than has hitherto been acknowledged. There were, in fact, points of tension or at least conflicts of interest between the Propaganda Ministry in Berlin, the *Internationale Filmkammer* (International Film Chamber, IFK), German foreign film sales representatives, and the *Hauptabteilung für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* (Central Branch for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda—HAVP) of the Reich Commissariat in Oslo. Relying on trade papers, publications, memos, letters, and other primary sources held by the German and Norwegian national archives as well as the *Nasjonalbiblioteket* in Oslo and the *Deutsche Kinemathek* in

Berlin, we seek to disentangle the various aspects of German cinema policy in Norway—its objectives, means, achievements, and failures. In so doing, we problematise unilateral accounts of the impact and role of Third Reich cinema outside Germany and contribute to the ongoing debate on the interwoven propagandistic and economic imperatives of German wartime film policy in Scandinavia and beyond. There is a rather inconvenient truth about the long-term impact of Third Reich cinema. The collaboration between German and Norwegian film functionaries shaped the Norwegian cinema landscape in the years to come by offering a suitable model to enhance production in spite of an overwhelming reliance on foreign imports. Even if the German dominance could be described as patronising and dominating, many of its ideas paved the way for the subsequent viable national film industry in Norway and its neighbouring countries.

Much scholarship on Third Reich cinema has focused on Joseph Goebbels and his attempt to use film as a medium that combines propagandistic and ideological messages with mass entertainment. Under his auspices, German cinema not only became a wartime commodity, it also developed into a real rival to Hollywood. Yet, many of the decisions that led to this were not made by Goebbels himself, for whom film was but one of his areas of responsibility. Given that his time was limited, he in fact delegated important decisions to local staff and like-minded persons working as functionaries, state officials, and film professionals, many of whom were born after 1900. We thus propose a closer look at those who were able to rise through the ranks under National Socialist rule. Among the people who had considerable impact on ideology, propaganda, and cultural policy as a means of soft power were Fritz Hippler, Hermann Esser, Johann Heinrich 'Hans' Hinkel, Ewald von Demandowsky, Werner Naumann, Wilfred von Oven, Leopold Gutterer, and Georg-Wilhelm (often simply G.W.) Müller. The latter is one of the primary focuses of this chapter. With the exception of the high-profile Reich Chairmen for Film (*Reichsfilmintendanten*) Hippler and Hinkel, it is remarkable that Goebbels' aides, that is, his junior propagandists, are frequently omitted or barely mentioned in key works on Third Reich cinema.[4]

The developments in 1930s Germany also had an effect on cinema in the Nordic states since there had always been very strong ties between the German film industry and the Scandinavian countries. So in trying to maintain its position in the Scandinavian market and to keep the competition from the US, Britain, and France at bay, the German film industry in the late 1930s could rely on official diplomatic channels in the Nordic

countries to lobby for German productions and also to increase pressure on film censorship authorities regarding pictures that were not in the interest of the Third Reich.[5] Subsequently, the outbreak of war and the subsequent German occupation of European countries had a seismic impact on film culture in those countries under control by the Wehrmacht. Very quickly, German commissioners were installed in the Nordic countries under German control to reorganise the film industries, establish a system of censorship, and implement a ban on British and American film imports. The focus was twofold. First, the distribution of films and newsreels were seen as important instruments for disseminating National Socialist ideas and more generally serving German military and political interests, not least by winning over the Scandinavian public by means of culture, as a form of soft power.[6] Second, it was equally or even more important to secure lucrative foreign markets for German films in order to fulfil Goebbels' dream of a second, German Hollywood.[7]

A prerequisite for achieving these goals was a 'communication motorway'. Yet the conditions in Norway were very different to other Scandinavian countries such as Denmark or Sweden, because it had not yet developed a viable national film industry of its own by the 1930s. While this can be seen as an impediment, it also meant an opportunity for receiving reconstruction aid. To this end, the financial investment of German authorities in occupied Norway was necessary to strategically develop the needed audiovisual infrastructure, including facilities, equipment, procedures, and structures, as well as other needed provisions.[8]

In short, propaganda and profit through cultural influence formed the basis of the German film strategy. It is fair to say in this context that Scandinavian markets were an integral part of the expansionist plans of Third Reich cinema. Norway, like other occupied countries, could be considered an experimental site for an envisioned post-war European film culture under German control. It was thus but one puzzle piece in the more general effort to use culture as leverage.

While German control certainly had a detrimental effect on the careers of their enemies—above all Jewish, Communist, Socialist, and various other types of oppositional film professionals—the presence of German commissioners also opened up opportunities for those who were prepared to work in one way or another with the occupiers. Such collaborators might have had a number of motives: career opportunities, mutual political allegiances and convictions, the possibility of aligning one's own agenda with those of the occupying forces, the prospect of protecting fellow

citizens and a somewhat treasured national film culture, or the chance to prevent something worse from happening through participation.

German-Norwegian collaboration was a mix of all the above. Rational and emotional reactions, as well as selfish and more altruistic motives, could in fact be intertwined in complex ways. By looking closely at how the German occupation administration tried to restructure and influence Norwegian film culture, this chapter examines the mode and level of German control, with particular focus on the National Socialist film functionaries in Norway: Wilhelm Müller-Scheld and Georg-Wilhelm Müller. While there are many differences to other occupied countries and their specific forms of building relationships and cooperation with representatives of Nazi Germany, this chapter's biographical approach raises several general questions: What was the nature of the personal relationships between film functionaries of the occupier and the occupied? How did this affect film policy and film culture? To what extent did the generational differences and competing interests inform the work environment within the German propaganda branch in occupied countries? In which ways were directives from Berlin negotiated and adjusted within the context of the occupied country? And, how can they be linked to the idea of a new European film order under German hegemony?

One of the foremost aims of German propaganda in Norway was to downplay the very fact that the country was occupied. As a 'Germanic country', Norway was to be understood as more of an ally than an adversary. As Mathias Friedel puts it '[…] the German occupation had to be rendered into a tokenistic autonomy'.[9] However, the ability to remain calm under pressure, patience, diplomatic finesse, and discretion were not the strong suit of the German policy makers in Norway, as personal recollections and reactions to the German occupation reveal.

Opera, Theatre, and Film as National Socialist Calling: Wilhelm Müller-Scheld

With the 1000 kilometres between Berlin and Oslo, Nazi film policy in Norway was quintessentially shaped by two German officers, the aforementioned Wilhelm Müller-Scheld and Georg-Wilhelm Müller. They were aided by the collaborating Norwegian filmmaker Leif Sinding. Both Müllers worked as civil servants and officers for the central propaganda branch in Oslo, which had local subsidiaries or representatives throughout the country (major cities had permanent Reich Commissariat presence,

e.g. Kristiansand, Stavanger, Bergen, Trondheim, Narvik, Tromsø, and Kirkenes; minor cities had liaison propaganda officials, e.g. Sarpsborg, Drammen, Skien, Hamar, Lillehammer, Molde, Bodø, and Vadsø).[10] Coming from different generations and backgrounds, they had quite dissimilar aspirations, ideals, and personal ambitions.

Wilhelm Müller-Scheld was born into an educated middle-class family on 31 July 1895 in Grebenroth in Hesse. He fought and was wounded in the First World War. For his duty, he was awarded a first- and a second-class Iron Cross.[11] He read literature, communication studies, and drama at the prestigious universities in Leipzig, Gießen, and Munich before working as an independent author, who became known for publishing anti-Semitic pamphlets among other activities.[12] As an active member of Rosenberg's militant *Kameradschaft für deutsche Künstler* (League for German Culture, KfdK) and SA leader, he was a staunch National Socialist before 1933 (party membership number 583,476). His infamous 1929 response to Erich Maria Remarque's novel, *Im Westen nichts Neues—eine Täuschung* (All Quiet on the Western Front—A Deception), ridiculed the hero as a 'childish old man' and questioned the book's petty bourgeois representation of war. Müller-Scheld was a theatre aficionado and had ambitions as playwright. He published several dramas under the pseudonym Grebenroth, including *Anna Maria*, *Ein Deutscher namens Stein*, *Eduard Keim,* and *Novemberballade*, yet none of them was performed on stage before 1933.[13]

Müller-Scheld joined the regional NSDAP administration in Hesse-Nassau in 1932 and became its propaganda leader in 1933. In the years to come, he was one of the influential cultural functionaries in Frankfurt—even if he had problems due to struggles for competence with city representatives and artistic directors.[14] In 1933, at the age of 38, he became the founding head of the *Landesstelle Hessen-Nassau*, the Propaganda Ministry's regional branch.[15] His specific area of responsibility was the division of theatre, art, and events. The other divisions were led by his subordinates, including the 24-year-old high-flyer G.W. Müller, with whom he worked with in various constellations in Frankfurt, Berlin, and Norway up until the end of war. As part of his main duties from 6 July 1933 to 30 June 1937 in Hesse-Nassau, Müller-Scheld compiled reports and background stories for the Ministry in Berlin about the cultural scene in Frankfurt. As Bettina Schültke has demonstrated, he was not only instrumental in the Aryanisation of the theatre scene, he also used his status to support his own literary ambitions. As Schültke puts it,

'[Müller-Scheld] used his position to achieve the acceptance of his own dilettantish plays at Frankfurt theatres'.[16] Yet, his organisation of the regional propaganda branch was very much appreciated by Goebbels in Berlin. In a job reference, he acknowledged Müller-Scheld's capabilities in using propaganda and that owing to his leadership 'the Ministry's regional branch was working well and successfully'.[17] From 1935 to 1938, he was leading representative of the *Reichstheaterkammer* (Reich Theatre Chamber) and member of the newly established *Reichskultursenat* (Reich Culture Senate) which helped him to achieve prominence beyond the Frankfurt region. In July 1937, Müller-Scheld was summoned to come to Berlin by Goebbels. Once he arrived at the centre of National Socialist propaganda and film policy, the Propaganda Minister wanted to entrust Müller-Scheld with the reorganisation of Ufa, which had just been nationalised under the auspices of the RMVP.[18]

Although Goebbels thought of Müller-Scheld as being too much of a theoretically-oriented intellectual and was less than pleased with an initial report he wrote on the organisation of Ufa (Fig. 3.1),[19] the Propaganda Minister nevertheless made him the first president of the newly established Film Academy in Potsdam-Babelsberg near Berlin a year later, in 1938. While Müller-Scheld might had several deficiencies in the eyes of Goebbels, the Propaganda Minister could always rely on Müller-Scheld's staunch National Socialist conviction. As such, Müller-Scheld's ambition at the academy was clear: German film must be aligned with National Socialism. In a *Festschrift* to Hitler on his 50th anniversary in 1939, Müller-Scheld singled out Karl Ritter as a role model for German filmmakers and outlined the ideal that both audiences and film professionals ought to believe in National Socialism: 'We do not want to see anyone sitting in our theatres who is not a convinced National Socialist. German film must be uncompromising in its service to the community, the nation, and the Führer'.[20] While he himself had very traditional academic training at university, he was careful to point out in public that the learning and teaching strategy at the Film Academy followed Goebbels' intention of a more hands-on, practice-led training that focussed more on actual skills than theory.[21] In an article in the official journal published by the Reich Film Chamber, *Der deutsche Film: Filmkunst und Filmwirtschaft*, he explains:

> [Teaching at] the Film Academy will differ entirely from traditional didactic methods. Practical exercises will be at the forefront. […]; theorising and

Im Namen
des
Deutschen Volkes
ernenne ich
Herrn
Wilhelm Müller-Scheld
zum
Präsidenten
der Deutschen Filmakademie.
Berlin, den 20. April 1938
Der Führer und Reichskanzler
Dr. Goebbels.

Wilhelm Müller-Scheld

1895 als vierter Sohn eines Volksschullehrers in Grebenroth im unteren Taunus geboren, kämpfte als Kriegsfreiwilliger von 1914 bis zum Ende des Krieges an der Westfront, in Nordrußland, in Rumänien und wieder an der Westfront, schwer verwundet, EK 2. und 1. Klasse und Hessische Tapferkeitsmedaille; zum Offizier im Sommer 1916 befördert, Kompanieführer und zuletzt Bataillonsadjutant. Nach dem Kriege studierte er u. a. Zeitungs- und Theaterwissenschaft sowie Literaturgeschichte und begann bereits damals seine Tätigkeit als Verfasser kämpferisch-kritischer Broschüren und auch als Dramatiker. Nach Einsatz für den Kampfbund für Deutsche Kultur sowie als SA-Führer und Gauredner 1932 zum Gaupropagandaleiter der NSDAP im Gau Hessen-Nassau berufen und Anfang Juli 1933 mit der Einrichtung und Leitung des jetzigen Reichspropagandaamtes Hessen-Nassau beauftragt; Präsidialrat der Reichstheaterkammer.

Fig. 3.1 Wilhelm Müller-Scheld's letter of appointment to become the president of the newly established Film Academy in Potsdam-Babelsberg and a short biography. (*Deutsche Filmakademie mit dem Arbeitsinstitut für Kulturfilmschaffen* (Berlin: Max Hesses, 1938), pp. 10–11. Public domain. Source: Library of ARKIVET Peace and Human Rights Centre, Kristiansand)

> philosophising will be replaced by imparting the basic knowledge of filmmaking.[22]

Müller-Scheld's time in Berlin and Babelsberg is also marked by his attempts to align his administrative and political position with his own artistic ambitions, for example, by adding his own books on the compulsory reading lists for dramaturgy[23] and establishing his own film company that capitalised on the expertise, equipment, and facilities of the *Deutsche Filmakademie*. As Christelle Le Faucheur puts it: 'Such artistic position and responsibilities exceeded the functions of an Academy president. Müller-Scheld, as well as Liebeneiner [who was recruited for the academy by Müller-Scheld and was to become the director of his future film

projects], seemed to have exploited their position at the Academy for personal gains, showing an opportunism not unusual for the time'.[24]

Only a few months after the enthusiastic opening of the academy, Müller-Scheld, in the words of Le Faucheur, 'seemed to be slightly on the defensive' in a follow-up special issue of *Der deutsche Film: Filmkunst und Filmwirtschaft* because of the high financial requirements of the academy.[25] Müller-Scheld, indeed, was held responsible for spiralling costs and also accused of bad management decisions. Particularly Goebbels was not very satisfied with the progress of the Film Academy and thus altogether changed his opinion about Müller-Scheld. While he had been pleased with his work in Hesse-Nassau, he was less than enthusiastic now about his leadership in Berlin and Babelsberg. On 15 November 1938, he notes in his diary that Müller-Scheld had selected *Ausschuß* (degraded elements) rather than aspiring, talented students for the film academy.[26] On 23 February 1940, Müller-Scheld fell out of grace altogether when the Propaganda Minister concluded in his diary: 'the Film Academy has too few students and is too expensive to run. Will be closed. Müller-Scheld, apparently, has not understood his mission'.[27] As Goebbels saw it, Müller-Scheld lacked assertiveness and organisational talent, in stark contrast to his former mentee G.W. Müller. Müller-Scheld was certainly a fanatic Nazi, yet his management style was more restrained. His main interest was that of an aesthete. Notwithstanding his debacle with the Film Academy—and perhaps owing to the patronage of G.W. Müller—Müller-Scheld was sent to Norway as head of the culture department in HAVP at the *Reichskommissariat* from April 1940 to October 1944.

The HAVP's organisational structure resembled Goebbels' Ministry in Berlin: the culture department was one of the five departments in the central office alongside propaganda, press, broadcasting, and schools and education.[28] Müller-Scheld was mainly responsible for the reorganisation of film and theatre, but also had contact to authors and other artists. In many ways, his work in Oslo continued the propaganda work he had begun in Frankfurt in 1933. After the war, Müller-Scheld worked as a playwright in Frankfurt until his death in 1970. As part of the Allied denazification initiative, he was considered to belong to group II (Offenders) and sentenced to two years in a labour camp and a fine of DM 2000.[29] As a result, he was barred from administrative positions as civil servant. Still, he never denounced National Socialism.[30]

Berlin Calling: The Career Propagandist Georg-Wilhelm Müller

Georg-Wilhelm Müller was born on 29 December 1909 in Königshütte in Upper Silesia (today Chorzów in Poland) (Fig. 3.2). The family moved to Frankfurt where he visited the grammar school *Kaiser-Friedrich-Gymnasium*.[31] Like other leading propagandists in the Third Reich, including Fritz Hippler, he joined the Nazi party on his 18th birthday on 29 December 1927 (membership number 74,380) and the SS in 1930 (membership number 3554) and made a name for himself as an ardent supporter and leader in the *Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund* (National Socialist German Students' League).[32] He studied law at several conservative universities (Rostock, Marburg, and Kiel) before coming to Frankfurt, in the state of Hesse-Nassau, for the winter term of 1931. He completed his studies with the first State Exam in 1933.

As a student leader and member of the SS, he was responsible for campus protests and the heckling of Jewish and Marxist professors and

Fig. 3.2 *SS Standartenführer* Georg-Wilhelm Müller (centre, behind *Reichskommissar* Josef Terboven). Photo taken on the occasion of Quisling being appointed Minister President on 1 February 1942. (National Archives, Oslo. Public domain)

students; in addition, he was instrumental in implementing National Socialist policies as part of the Aryanisation of the hitherto rather liberal University of Frankfurt.[33] Together with Müller-Scheld, he spoke publicly about the reorganisation of the academic landscape in Frankfurt. Following his studies, he joined Müller-Scheld's *Landesstelle Hessen-Nassau*. At this point, his strong beliefs in the National Socialist cause were no longer a mere calling or voluntary work, but the beginning of a fledgling career. Both Müller-Scheld and the Nazi politician and regional leader (*Gauleiter*) Jakob Sprenger became his mentors. When Sprenger, who was best man at Müller's wedding in July 1935, entrusted the NSDAP's regional press office to Müller, he explained this decision by noting that G.W. Müller was a 'fighter for Adolf Hitler from his early youth […]. Only those who had been part of our struggle during all of its stages can hold such an appointment'.[34]

In November 1936, G.W. Müller's career gathered speed when he was promoted, becoming Goebbels' personal consultant and confidant. The Propaganda Minister was very pleased with Müller's appointment, noting in his diary: 'even if he goes by [the ordinary name] Müller, he makes a good impression'.[35]

'At the centre of power', as Mathias Friedel summarises, 'Müller organised the Minister's day-to-day affairs, his calendar management, official trips, and correspondence. He was certainly involved in the propagandistic and political matters at the highest level, including communicating information about the pogroms against Jews in 1938'.[36] He was involved in film matters, too. As part of his first assignment in Berlin, he reorganised the extensive *Reichsfilmarchiv* (Reich Film Archive) that had been established in 1935. During his time at the RMVP, Müller also socialised with Goebbels privately and was often a guest at his Bogensee retreat. Together with Goebbels, he edited a collection of essays from the period when the Nazis came to power and he published a text on the organisational structure of the Propaganda Ministry.[37] Whereas Goebbels disliked samples he read of Müller's written works, such as a book preface or his draft for a new film, he appreciated his quick-witted verbal replies and reasoning.[38] In violation of administrative age regulations, Goebbels prematurely promoted him to *Oberregierungsrat* (senior executive officer) in 1938, when he was 29.[39]

Because of the disputes between Müller-Scheld and Goebbels, the former ultimately became a protégé rather than a mentor for Müller, as he had been in previous years. During the war, both left for Norway, but it

was Müller who was appointed head of the propaganda division at the *Reichskommissariat Norwegen* ahead of the more senior Müller-Scheld. From the age of just 31, he was, again prematurely, promoted to the senior civil service rank of *Ministerialrat* (Permanent Secretary) in charge of the HAVP's five divisions with a total of more than 100 employees.[40] In addition to Müller-Scheld, G.W. Müller also appointed two other former colleagues from Hesse-Nassau to Oslo: Johann (Hans) Moser, who became responsible for monitoring and guiding the press from February 1941 until the end of war, and Friedrich Grebe, who became the leader of the propaganda department within HAVP.[41] The recruiting of former colleagues demonstrates that Müller wanted to rely on people he knew from home and people whose allegiance to the National Socialist cause could be taken for granted.

Archival documents reveal that G.W. Müller was an undiplomatic, hotheaded, and erratic personality, a dyed-in-the-wool Nazi who usually appeared wearing his SS uniform.[42] Yet his authority, intransigence, and dedication in Norway was also admired by both of his bosses, *Reichskommissar* Terboven and Goebbels back in Berlin. The latter explains his decision to send Müller to Norway by writing on 21 April 1940: 'Terboven has just been announced political commissioner for Norway. With much power of authority and prepared to fight. I will send along Müller as my representative. He's very pleased about this. He will be given detailed instructions: no lies. Taking drastic measures, no compromises'.[43] As of 1943, Müller held the civilian title of *Ministerialdirigent* and had attained the rank of *Oberführer* within the SS. After the war, Müller was sentenced to two and a half years of imprisonment after being found guilty of illegal personal gain and extortion in Norway. He was never tried for his actions associated with the HAVP. In West Germany, he was also released as a 'fellow traveller' (*Mitläufer*). Müller was living in Hamburg as a businessman until his death in 1989.[44]

Coming to Oslo: NS Cultural Policy in Norway

The relocation of these two figures to Oslo was characterised by five notable features, which will be examined in greater detail in this section. First, with the move to Norway, the relationship between Müller-Scheld and Müller was turned upside down. This was not unimportant and provides a framework for understanding the power dynamics between them. They had fundamentally different paths of life and career, and different political

aspirations. In the last stages of negotiations between the German occupation authorities and Norwegian representatives between 13 June and 18 September 1940, G.W. Müller led the German delegation.[45] He even became Terboven's deputy. This meant that G.W. Müller had a much greater area of responsibility than just film and propaganda.

Ellef Ringnes, a Norwegian businessman and film company owner with excellent German contacts, gave an interesting description of what he saw as the relationship between the two Müllers. As in other German-occupied countries, Ufa's Foreign Weekly Newsreel (*Auslandstonwoche*, ATW) was screened before the main feature films in Norway. Müller-Scheld was known to be a true believer in the ATWs as a propaganda vehicle despite the frequent negative reactions to them from Norwegian cinemagoers.[46] G.W. Müller was likely just as positive about the propaganda effect of the ATWs. However, Ringnes drew the conclusion—and he knew both well—that Müller failed to intervene so as not to disavow his former mentor Müller-Scheld.[47] As a source for understanding the introduction of compulsory screening of ATW in Norway, Ringnes' account has little value. But as a source for understanding the complex relationship between the two Müllers, and how this relationship was assessed by Norwegian collaborators, it is credible and telling. Loyalty, however, only went so far for G.W. Müller as head of the HAVP. In 1941, he attempted to have Müller-Scheld replaced, but failed in finding the right person to take over his position.[48]

The second feature of the move to Oslo was that there was no film department at the HAVP. This point is omitted by previous research but must not be overlooked. It is true that HAVP was organised on the model of RMVP, a structure which Müller himself had described in meticulous detail in a report commissioned by Goebbels in 1940.[49] In Berlin, there was a film department; in Norway, however, film was just one of many areas of concern within the general culture department led by Müller-Scheld. Film had no strong ambassadors in HAVP. This is, of course, somewhat ironic, given that two of its leading officials were in film as a propaganda tool before coming to Oslo. In addition to Müller-Scheld, Eduard Gudenrath had also been headhunted from the Film Academy for a post in the culture department of HAVP.

Two examples shed light on both Müller-Scheld's and Müller's lack of enthusiasm for film. First, Müller-Scheld, who corresponded regularly with Goebbels since the Nazi party seized power, explained his dedication to the Nazi Party by telling the story of his political-cultural awakening in

a letter from December 1933. Therein Müller-Scheld boasted that he had participated in more than 50 battles in the First World War. As a soldier, he experienced the German defeat in 1918 as a watershed moment, not so much because of the loss of the war itself, but because of his contempt for 'passive natures'. Then, when he saw and heard Richard Wagner's opera *Parsifal* for the first time in 1919, he found 'a constructive relation' to his own feelings. Thus, his great passion for culture became embedded in his own life story. In short, he wanted to do great things for the German people, and specifically via culture.[50] This anecdote not only illustrates that Müller-Scheld was keen to let the newly appointed Propaganda Minister know that he became an ardent National Socialist in the early years of the movement, but also that he strongly believed in the power of cultural expression and art to affect people. It is telling, though, that this 'cultural awakening' was at an opera performance rather than through the popular medium of cinema which is not mentioned at all. Similarly, when G.W. Müller summarised the activities of the Norwegian HAVP under his leadership as part of his post-war hearings in April 1946, any mention of film is missing altogether. Listing all aspects that had been given top priority regarding their propaganda value, he states:

> […] measures which were thought suitable for Norwegian conditions were: organizing German theatre and opera performances, concerts with prominent German artists, the donation of German books to libraries, and the exchange of German and Norwegian students. The periodical '*Deutsch-Norwegische Monatsheft*' (German-Norwegian Monthly) served a similar purpose.[51]

Thus, while Müller-Scheld's appreciation of traditional high art left a mark on propaganda in Norway, he and his boss Müller seem to have paid little attention to film matters.

As for the third feature: it can be said that the importance of the RMVP as a pivotal agency for the cultural propaganda in occupied Norway is exaggerated. There were no special instructions from Goebbels' ministry for the reorganisation of Norwegian cinema. Indeed, there are a few examples of orders that only indirectly involved film, such as guidelines for propaganda exhibitions as part of the anti-Bolshevik campaign from the summer of 1941.[52] In January 1944, Terboven and G.W. Müller instructed Müller-Scheld to stop screening films featuring Goebbels' former mistress Lída Baarová as leading actress. Whether this was a response to an original

request by Goebbels remains unclear. In any case, the episode is but one example of the decentralised power structures at play. German senior civil servants in Oslo rather than in Berlin ultimately decided what was to be shown on Norwegian screens.[53]

The fourth feature is that being in Norway meant meeting people. Neither Müller-Scheld nor Müller had received diplomatic or intercultural training. While this fact alone did not necessarily mean that they were perceived negatively abroad, G.W. Müller time and again displayed the ill-mannered behaviour he was known for and had no reservations at all about being feared. He had not altered his leadership style at all since the early 1930s. As Petra Bonavita explains in her work on Müller's role in the National Socialist student movement in Frankfurt: 'Already as a young member of the SS at the beginning of the 1930s, Müller stood out for his authoritative and militaristic bearing. His system of control at the university was based on strict discipline. His SS unit was prone to violence. This is how his group ruled over university events and academic disciplines'.[54] Interestingly, G.W. Müller himself acknowledged that his leadership style was not liked by all in a report from January 1934 about his two years of political agitation at the University of Frankfurt. As such, he admitted that some students went to other universities because of his unrelenting activities.[55] The inability or unwillingness to change his own actions, a quality that will create problems later in his career, can already be seen here. Rather than admitting his own shortcomings and failures, he points out the inadequacies of others. The degree to which Müller's approach and behaviour caused shock and anxiety among those he met and was supposed to collaborate with in Norway could, thus, have been expected.

In short, both Müller-Scheld and Müller experienced impediments to their political project due to the simple fact that the local people they met with did not as a rule willingly comply. There is a rich variety of evidence to illustrate this, from all 'sides' of the political spectrum in Norway. The German-friendly businessman Ringnes noted that Müller gave the impression of being a 'boy': 'I estimated him to be barely 30 years old, but age didn't matter in Germany when it came to the high positions'.[56] The rector of the University of Oslo was shocked by Müller's lack of manners and uncouth appearance.[57] NS politician and journalist Odd E. Melsom had the exact same impression and remembered Müller as a man, with whom it was impossible to cooperate.[58] Back in Berlin, however, Goebbels was still so pleased with Müller's work that he denied him the wish to be transferred back to Germany in September 1942.[59]

The reactions to Müller, as can be inferred from such statements, were more than a clash of culture, they also emanated from a generational conflict between those who were born in the nineteenth century and the many young career propagandists who Michael Wildt had called the 'war youth generation' (*Kriegsjugendgeneration*) born between 1900 and 1912. They had experienced the First World War as children while being too young to serve themselves. This missed opportunity predisposed them to radicalisation during the Weimar Republic. They desired a significant break with the past, had a strong affinity to the racist and elitist worldview within National Socialist organisations, and they harboured a deep mistrust of older generations, whom they felt were responsible for the defeat in 1918.[60] Particularly in the propaganda branch, there are numerous examples of how members of this generation were able to pursue very successful careers not so much based on their actual achievements and expertise—indeed, relevant fields such as information policy, public diplomacy, and communication studies were not at all established in academia at that time—but rather because of their assertiveness and political convictions.

An interesting source on the relationship between Müller and Müller-Scheld and the varying impressions they made in social and political appearances is to be found in a note from a meeting between German officials and representatives from Norwegian artist unions on 27 May 1940. Müller acting as an unpredictable choleric person, Müller-Scheld trying a more diplomatic, considerate approach:

> Ministerialrath [*sic*] Müller completely lost his composure, leapt around the floor and shouted […] Then, Müller-Scheld began: 'My Lord, my Lord -, […]' and got the ministerial council to agree that the incident should be bypassed, and the negotiations begin again.[61]

The purpose of the meeting, seen from a German perspective, was to convince Norwegian artists that collaboration was necessary and inevitable. However, the two Müllers' 'good cop/bad cop' routine proved counterproductive as Norwegian representatives increasingly responded by preparing for protracted resistance. While their differences in character certainly made working together arduous at times, G.W. Müller and Müller-Scheld could also complement one another quite well. On the one hand, Müller-Scheld was an intellectual organiser, with interpersonal communication as one of his strengths, while on the other hand, G.W. Müller remained a ruthless and impatient man of action throughout the Third

Reich. When Müller-Scheld was still his superior at the propaganda branch in Frankfurt, he actually gave kudos to Müller, stating: '[Müller] proved his worth as an unflinching daredevil. Wherever something happened, Müller was rallied for support'.[62]

While personal character traits and the generational conflict in Germany both help to explain the fraught relationships of G.W. Müller within the HAVP, what about his relations with foreign nationals? Educational, cultural, and age differences seemed to be an obstacle when dealing with his Norwegian counterparts, too. A closer look at the people involved suggests that there were hardly any Norwegians of the same age and mindset, with whom a younger German propagandist such as G.W. Müller could easily liaise. The typical Norwegian collaborator was older (such as Sinding himself), had a solid academic background (like Minister Dr Gulbrand Lunde), or work experience in arts and culture production (like film director and advertising specialist Walter Fyrst). Müller-Scheld's curriculum vita was in many ways more compatible with this environment.

The fifth and final feature of this period in Oslo is that Müller-Scheld and Müller knew little to nothing about Norwegian history, social conditions, or the cultural scene when they arrived in the country—and they received no training. They were sent to Norway because of their ideological allegiance with the Nazi course rather than their competencies for the particular posts. At least Müller-Scheld courted well-known Norwegian intellectuals and artists for help getting ideas and tried to familiarise himself with Norwegian film classics and Norwegian film directors in the summer of 1940.[63] The following episode also illustrates Müller-Scheld's interest and gratitude. During his farewell address to his Norwegian colleagues in *Kultur-og folkeopplysningsdepartementet* (Ministry of Culture and Popular Enlightenment, KFD), before unwillingly heading to the front in October 1944, he said: 'My friends, you have a national anthem with a touching melody and a heart-touching text. This song begins with the words: "Yes, we love this country". Now let me say goodbye to you with a slight change to this phrase: "I love this country, too!"'[64] This kind of effort, curiosity, and appreciation was not seen with Müller.

Of course, there is no denying that there were also plenty of Norwegians who cooperated with their German occupiers for the wide set of reasons mentioned above. But even Norwegian collaborators such as Sinding did not socialise with Müller-Scheld unless it was necessary and most certainly held G.W. Müller at arm's length. Even senior members of the German occupational forces in Norway, who had little to fear from the latter,

reacted more than reserved to G.W. Müller. In talking about different decision makers after the war, the erstwhile commander of German troops in Norway from 1940 to 1944, General Nikolaus von Falkenhorst remembers G.W. Müller as an arrogant and indelicate agitator who was 'perhaps the most unpleasant personality within the entire Reichskommissariat'.[65]

German-Norwegian Cultural Relations: From Appreciation to Collaboration

Notwithstanding the many examples of bad leadership within the HAVP, the aim to use culture as a means of soft power to consolidate German control was not unsuccessful on the whole. It just had little to do with the efforts by Müller, Müller-Scheld, and the HAVP. In this regard, the situation in Norway was very similar to that in other countries such as the Netherlands, where propaganda efforts were actually hampered by the hapless efforts of German propagandists.[66] The undeniable successes of German cultural policy in Norway can be explained by the fact that German culture was traditionally held in high regard by Norwegians and the Scandinavian-educated middle class more generally. What helped the Germans use culture as political leverage was indeed the positive standing of Germany in Norway and Scandinavia in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries in the realms of education, art, and culture. In the years before the war, just as in neighbouring Sweden, many Norwegian citizens and intellectuals spoke German as a second foreign language and had a somewhat positive view of German culture. It is also noteworthy that Ufa's foreign newsreels, which were produced as early as 1927, were shown in Norway for years before occupation, thus providing the population with a German interpretation of world politics.[67]

Describing the phenomenon of Germanophilia in 1930s continental Europe, John Lukacs notes:

> Not every Germanophile was a Nazi. After 1870 Germany was the most important nation on the Continent. Her dominant position was not merely political, military, or economic. German, not French, was the second language of millions […]. German modes of education, from the middle schools to the universities, had been adopted by nearly all states of Eastern and Northern Europe. […] German forms of thought, and of philosophy, were fundamental in the intellectual development of entire generations […]. On the highest levels of European culture and society the Germanophile

> impact was limited, but it was far from insignificant. […] In Scandinavia, especially in Sweden, there were many people who were Germanophiles without being Nazis […].[68]

Nevertheless, the most important Norwegian collaborator with regard to film and film policy, journalist and filmmaker Leif Sinding, entered into this role arguably less because of passion for German culture—as was the case for some of his fellow Norwegian citizens—and more on account of the career opportunity that suddenly presented itself with the German invasion (see the chapter by Thomas V.H. Hagen in this volume). Born on 19 November 1895 in Kristiania, he belonged to the same generation as Müller-Scheld. He was a member of the Norwegian fascist party *Nasjonal Samling* led by Vidkun Quisling who sympathised with the German National Socialists and was installed by them as Minister President on 1 February 1942.[69] Together with the Danish Leif Gamberg, Sinding assumed a leading role in the reorganisation of Scandinavian film culture through his membership in the IFK—an organisation that was established under the aegis of German and Italian film functionaries as a counterweight to the American lobby group and trade organisation *Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association of America* (MPPDA). Gamberg was the organisation's Danish representative, and Sinding was the Norwegian voice in the institution. Writing in the IFK journal *Inter-Film: Blätter der Internationalen Filmkammer* in 1944, Sinding outlined the future of Norwegian cinema, believing in the distinctive quality of its national film culture:

> Naturally we do not intend to produce a large-scale cinema. For this, our country is much too small. Yet, it is our intention to make 10 to 12 Norwegian films each year, most of which are artistically and technically of such high standard that they can be shown throughout Europe as a pleasurable and interesting alternative to the regular cinema programme. […] I am convinced that the Norwegian film will continuously evolve from now on. Norway has so much to offer in all the arts. We are admittedly but a small country, but our remarkable and wild nature, our powerful, Germanic heritage with its special character, our proud history, the works of our ingenious poets – these are all attributes that will leave their mark on Norwegian cinema and popularise our films in Europe.[70]

And while he does not mention the German impact—not to mention the role of Müller-Scheld and G.W. Müller—in Norway explicitly, he

nevertheless acknowledges that while Norwegian film struggled in the 1930s, the situation will only improve under the current conditions: 'How much better will it be from now on, given that film production receives the support it deserves. Hopefully, we can be redeemed from the remaining sins committed by former politicians in the foreseeable future'.[71] Summarising Sinding's intentions and success, Benjamin George Martin writes:

> Norwegian journalist and director Leif Sinding, one of the few experienced film producers and directors in the country, moved quickly to seize the opportunity the German-led new order seemed to present to drive through major reforms of film life in Norway. His goal was to stimulate domestic production in a country whose first and only film studio, the municipally owned Norsk Film, had only opened in 1935. Working closely with the Nazi commissar for film and theatre [Müller-Scheld] and wielding the decisions of the International Film Chamber as support, by 1942 Sinding had succeeded in creating an Axis-style centralized film industry. Norway now had a State Film Directorate (with Sinding as director) in firm control over Nordisk Film's studios near Oslo, where the production of newsreels, documentaries, and features was supported by new film taxes, and could begin producing for export into the IFC's [International Film Chamber] new Film Europe.[72]

We would argue with Martin's view that Sinding 'moved quickly to seize the opportunity the German-led new order seemed to present to drive through major reforms of film life in Norway', because his actions were, in fact, rather considerate and slow. It should also be pointed out that Martin is incorrect in his claim that the overall number of films produced during occupation was eight.[73] In fact, a total of 20 feature films were produced in Norway during the war.[74] Nevertheless, Martin's conclusion is appropriate: the Second World War was a very prolific time for Norwegian film production, which, to some extent, paved the way for post-war newsreel and film production by leaving behind structures, material, and film funds.[75] As in other occupied countries, the HAVP benefitted from working together with local film practitioners and functionaries because reorganisation was more successful when it was carried out by Norwegian individuals, who were acquainted with the existing structures, organisations, and networks. G.W. Müller, Müller-Scheld, and the Ufa regional branch dictated the general guidelines, while the day-to-day routines were allocated to Sinding and his organisation.

Scholars are uncertain as to why Sinding collaborated with the German occupiers. Was it because of his right-wing political convictions, his hatred for the Norwegian municipal cinema system, opportunism, or a bit of all of these motivations? Whatever the reasons, he became instrumental in reorganising the Norwegian film industry in his position as leader of the newly established *Statens filmdirektorat* (National Film Directorate). Together with Müller-Scheld and the young Norwegian Minister Gulbrand Lunde (born in 1901), he planned the restructuring of Norwegian film and cinema.[76] Their plan was part of a larger effort to reorganise European art and culture along the *völkisch* ideology of nationally distinct forms of cultural expression. This attempt was more than a mere means of power consolidation for German authorities, it offered opportunities for those 'Germanic' nations that accepted the leadership of the Third Reich. Regarding this, Sinding's, Müller's, and Müller-Scheld's efforts were congruent: they wanted to replace the liberal cosmopolitanism associated with 1930s urban culture with alleged national specificities. In their view, 'internationalism' must replace 'internationalism', to use Benjamin G. Martin's crucial distinction.[77]

A milestone in the development of the German film industry's foreign strategy occurred only ten days after the German invasion of Poland. At a high-profile meeting of the *Fachgruppe Filmaußenhandel* (Work Group for Foreign Film Trade) at the *Reich Film Chamber* on 11 September 1939, industry representatives were informed that Goebbels had passed a decree to increase foreign sales as much as possible and the major changes in the organisation of film export and foreign operations more generally were laid out. The plans included the centralisation of forwarding offices and the establishment of a *Zentralausschuss für den Filmexport* (Central Committee for Film Export) to replace the *Work Group for Foreign Film Trade*, which was to monitor all foreign developments closely.[78] Following this, the plan to fundamentally reorganise European culture was rather quickly initiated across all occupied countries. According to the president of the *Deutsche Akademie* (German Academy) Ludwig Siebert, the military defeats of Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France on 28 November 1940, needed to be followed by a cultural new order. As he put it, the Axis powers now sought 'the reordering of the world with regard to culture, to make it such that a new culture may develop after the war'.[79] His plans thereby coincided with Reich Minister of Economic Affairs Walther Funk, who, as Martin explains, had publicly 'outlined a restructured, unified European economy under German leadership [on 25

July 1940]. This intensified an already ongoing debate over the prospects for a coordinated European *Großraumwirtschaft* (large-space economy), perhaps to feature a unified currency and continent-wide protectionist measures, to be run from Germany'.[80]

What is often overlooked in accounts on Third Reich cinema is that German films were very popular in many of the occupied countries. Of course, the German authorities were able to regulate film distribution and organise a de facto ban of films from Allied countries. Yet, this cannot explain the increasing numbers of viewers who purchased cinema tickets for German films and the general acclaim of such films among the population. As such, the success of German films in Norway can only be partly attributed to Müller-Scheld and his collaboration with Sinding. Far more important than the ban against American and Allied films was the work that had been carried out by representatives of German film companies in Norway during the first months of the occupation and the popularity of the films with audiences.[81] Or, to put it differently, in addition to varying degrees of lobbying and political pressure, a well-established star and genre system, and functioning marketing measures, the success of German films in Norway and other countries was also due to the aesthetic and dramaturgical achievements of Third Reich cinema.

While the most popular films in Oslo during the occupation years were of Scandinavian origin—among the ten most popular films, three were Norwegian, two were Danish, and four were Swedish[82]—there were also German box office hits. The most popular German features throughout the country were *Die Frau meiner Träume* (*The Woman of My Dreams*, 1944) with Marika Rökk, and Veit Harlan's films *Die goldene Stadt* (*The Golden City*, 1942) and *Immensee* (1943).[83] As one might expect, the censored Norwegian newspapers enthusiastically presented German premiere films. One review in a local newspaper in Kristiansand (incorrectly) praised *Die goldene Stadt* as Europe's first colour film: 'Throughout the country, the film has had an outstanding success which was also true last night in Kristiansand. In Trondheim, the film beat all records in terms of audience influx. In Fredrikstad, massive police assistance was needed to organise the queues and in Oslo there were 155,000 people who saw the film during the two months it was shown there'.[84]

Also, *Titanic* (1943), starring Norwegian actress Kirsten Heiberg in a supporting role, was among the most popular films in many cities.[85] All of Heiberg's German films were released in Norway during the war. Although her films were rather modest productions—such as the crime drama

Falschmünzer (*Forger*, 1940), in which she plays the role of a female criminal—they were nevertheless quite successful when compared to other German films in Norway with a comparable budget.[86]

The casting of Heiberg was not a coincidence. The German film industry, in its endeavour to form a new Film Europe movement under German control, strategically tried to build a pan-European star system. As such, many of the stars of Third Reich cinema were in fact not German but came from numerous other European countries. In addition to the already established foreign stars of Third Reich cinema—Kristina Söderbaum, Zarah Leander, Johannes Heesters, René Deltgen, and others—Germany fostered the fledgling careers of the Norwegian actresses Gerd Høst and even more so Kirsten Heiberg in the late 1930s to increase the popularity of German films abroad. Owing to her successes in the early years of the war, *Reichsfilmintendant* (Reich Film Director) Hans Hinkel and Ufa officially approved the renewal for Heiberg's contract on 15 June 1943.[87]

The popularity of foreign stars was also utilised for its news value in propaganda (Fig. 3.3). Kirsten Heiberg was repeatedly interviewed and featured as a means to persuade the Norwegian public that all was well in Berlin. In December 1940, the *Norsk rikskringkasting* (Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation, NRK) conducted a radio interview with Heiberg in cooperation with the German radio sender *Deutscher Rundfunk*. The interview gave the impression that cultural life in Germany was largely unaffected by the war and that there were almost no queues in Berlin—except in front of the cinemas. Heiberg stated that the popularity of cinema in wartime was due to the Germans' strong interest in film as an art form, and concluded that life in Berlin was even better than before.[88]

Money Matters: Norway as a Lucrative Foreign Market

In spite of the overall good relationship between the German occupation authorities and their Norwegian collaborators, their objectives were not always aligned. One particular bone of contention between the Norwegian *National Film Directorate* and the Germans had less to do with the HAVP or individual films and more to do with the attempt by Germany's leading film company *Universum Film AG* (Ufa) to gain control of all foreign film imports and their distribution in Norway. As in other countries, regional subsidiaries and distribution companies were central to securing a

Fig. 3.3 Autograph card showing Kirsten Heimberg as a confident, modern, urban woman: smoking nonchalantly and wearing flannel trousers. Circa 1940. (Tobias Hochscherf private collection)

propitious market position for the German film business. The activities were coordinated from Berlin by Berthold von Theobalt, head of the *Ufa-Auslandsabteilung* (Ufa foreign operations office). Bjørn Sørenssen explains that the conflict in Norway was only reconciled when a compromise was reached, '[…] whereby Ufa was allowed to set up a distribution company for German films in Norway'.[89] German distributors in Norway benefitted much from the decision to combine screenings of newsreels, documentaries, and feature films. This was common practice in the occupied territories of the Reich, as Roel Vande Winkel explains with regard to the situation in Belgium:

> While cinema owners were previously allowed to select their programmes freely, and quite often combined two feature films in the same programme, a mandatory structure was now imposed. Henceforth, a programme had to include one feature film, one short film (max. 1900 meters) and one newsreel. This triptych was based on the German model ('Hauptfilm-Kulturfilm-Wochenschau') and was also introduced elsewhere in occupied Europe, for example, in the Netherlands. The newsreel to be shown, was provided by Ufa. In other words, it had to be a version of the Ufa's ATW, adapted for the Belgian market.[90]

The German film business' foreign revenues increased across Europe and beyond. By 1943–1944, licences from foreign film distribution amounted to 51.5 million Reichsmarks and were continuing to grow as a progress report from 13 November 1944 specifies.[91] Norway also contributed to the economic success of foreign German film sales. Norwegian cinema programmes had traditionally been dominated by imports, and during the 1920s and 1930s such films more often than not came from countries other than Germany. Before the occupation in 1939, the most successful imports were from the US (248 films) and France (43), followed by Germany (24 films), Sweden (20 films), and Britain (11 films). Already by 1940, however, German films topped the list of all imports in Norway with 79 films, which increased to more than 115 in the following years.[92] What the National Socialists thus achieved in Norway was nothing less than the complete domination of German films in the nation's cinemas. Sixty per cent of the films shown in the cinemas of occupied Norway were German.[93] During the war period, German films had completely supplanted Hollywood.

The German propaganda branches across Norway noted such developments with satisfaction. Cinema sales and revenues from regional cinemas were meticulously reported to the HAVP in Oslo and then passed on to Berlin.[94] These developments were quite good news for the German industry and the propagandists. According to one report, the number of cinemagoers in Norway increased by 50 per cent from 1940 to 1944.[95] This was a slight exaggeration, however—in actuality, cinema attendance only increased from 11 million to 15 million in this period.[96] Nevertheless, the report may have been written in good faith, since the highly diverse structure of the Norwegian cinema landscape made it difficult to acquire reliable numbers of total cinema attendance. Even so, the reports were certainly written to impress the superiors in Berlin. A more contextualised presentation would have shown that the considerable increase could not be fully attributed to the efforts of German propagandists. The fact is that the high number of German-occupying forces also contributed to the increase in ticket sales during the occupation and that cinemagoing had been displaying a rising trend already in the years prior to the German invasion (and the numbers actually increased even faster after May 1945).[97]

As with other reports that were compiled for the decision makers in the Reich's capital, the summaries of developments and data relating to Norwegian film were more or less selective and consistently sugar-coated. For example, the reports compiled for the two people in charge of the now nationalised German film business, Reich Chairman for Film Hans Hinkel and *Reichsbeauftragter für die deutsche Filmwirtschaft* (Reich Commissioner for the German Film Industry) Max Winkler in November 1944 were overwhelmingly positive, stating that 'the film business in Norway, apart from a few inconsequential boycott attempts, has developed very satisfyingly' and even a few months later the reports to Berlin affirmed that 'business is consistently well'.[98] What the reports fail to mention is that boycott campaigns, cinema strikes, and anti-German demonstrations were not at all uncommon and arguably hampered the efforts of the HAVP and the German film industry's Norwegian representatives.[99]

Yet, as the minutes of an Ufa board meeting on the situation of foreign revenue on 2 March 1945 shows, compared with the at best 'satisfactory' situation in other countries and regions, the situation in Norway was no cause for concern. While Denmark reported acts of sabotage, the situation in the Netherland suffered from blackouts that prevented screenings, and the censorship decisions of the Spanish authorities were lamented, the meeting concludes that in Norway 'business is consistently quite good'.

The only regions to be more favourably assessed were Italy and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.[100]

While most aspects of Sinding's and Müller-Scheld's reorganisation of Norwegian cinema was completed by 1942,[101] not everything could be implemented at the same pace. Some measures showed results rather quickly, others took somewhat more time. The implementation of a rigid hierarchical and centralised film industry structure, which was organised according to the idea that National Socialist politicians had primacy over written statutes and regulation (*Führerprinzip*), was not easy in a democratic country with a largely decentralised film culture. It also took some time to ultimately expel all Jews from working in Norwegian film. In fact, it was until 1944 that the draft statutes for a more radical corporate film association (*Norges Filmforbund*)—which was never realised—explicitly stated that Jews could not be members.[102] The point was somewhat moot at that point, though, since by 1944 most Norwegian Jews had already been arrested and deported, unless they had managed to hide or escape to Sweden or the UK.[103]

Conclusions

The war and the military successes of the Wehrmacht paved the way for the unparalleled expansion of Third Reich cinema and the reordering of European culture under the hegemony of National Socialism. This resulted in a multifaceted attempt by different agencies and agents to use this momentum to establish Germany as the most successful European film nation—which proved mostly successful. By 1943–1944 German cinema was a real rival to Hollywood as far as the countries and regions under German control were concerned. Yet, the military defeat of the Third Reich in 1945 put a sudden end to German cinema's success. Its legacy, however—which includes cinemagoing experiences from 1939 to 1945 as well as the reorganisation of the film culture in many European countries—remains relatively under-researched.

This chapter's examination of the interplay of different propagandists and their Norwegian collaborators and contacts as well as the role of the HAVP and representatives for the German film industry highlights the complex interplay of interests, strategies, and measures in the cinema of occupied Norway. Future studies will certainly benefit from looking at such differing levels of agency. As the case of Norway clearly shows, there was not one singular National Socialist interest at play, but rather a

plethora of military, economic, political, and propaganda concerns—and even within the HAVP itself, different individuals pursued varied and competing agendas. One notable aspect is the role that generational differences played. Quite often, the young generation of fanatical National Socialists had a seismic impact on propaganda and film policy during the war. Comparing and contrasting their work in a more international context would be a worthwhile research project, including an examination of the role of the IFK and Ufa's various foreign branches and distribution companies. The many striking similarities between measures taken in Norway and Belgium, for example, demonstrate that German agencies learned from each other and tried to implement what had proven effective elsewhere. Yet, there are also, of course, noticeable differences due to cultural distinctions. The success or failure of films—and propaganda more generally—in the occupied territories depended on how quickly those involved understood such cultural differences and were able to respond to them in an appropriate way. Often, as was the case in Norway, the propagandists alone were rather ill-equipped to do so and relied heavily on cooperation with local contacts.

Moreover, a closer examination shows that even in these strictly hierarchical organisations, not every decision was made from the top down, sometimes decision makers in Berlin were not involved in local decisions at all or were actually misled about the situation by all too euphemistic reports on the success of foreign propaganda efforts. As our study shows, the deployment of G.W. Müller and Wilhelm Müller-Scheld to Norway was motivated less by their cultural knowledge or interest in Norway and Scandinavia and had more to do with their ideological beliefs in National Socialism and in Germany's claim to cultural hegemony. The creation of HAVP in Oslo, moreover, was no magic wand for local German cultural propagandists, nor for Goebbels, due to inconsistent policies. German cultural success relied rather on the widespread appreciation of German culture dating back to the nineteenth century and the Weimar Republic, the attractiveness of individual films, the appeal of Third Reich stars, and perhaps most importantly on the Wehrmacht's military accomplishments. As soon as the military situation turned against Nazi Germany, however, everything else changed with it. One concrete consequence of this was a lack of material resources and the draining of competent individuals because they were needed for the war effort.[104]

Yet, while the propaganda branches in other 'Germanic' countries made no attempt to promote the development of national film industries,

seeking instead to aid the interests of Third Reich cinema alone,[105] the situation was different in Norway. With the assistance provided by the occupation authorities, the Second World War was ultimately a prosperous time for the Norwegian film business, if only for those who were prepared to cooperate with Nazi Germany and its representatives and to accept the rule of HAVP and the Wehrmacht.

Notes

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12. Schültke (2004), p. 37.
13. On the various plays, see Schültke (2004), pp. 346–351 and 392–399.
14. Schültke (2004), pp. 39–41.
15. Friedel (2010), pp. 62–69.
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18. Friedel (2010), 76.

19. See the entry in his diary on 16 September 1937 where he judges Müller-Scheld straight from the heart: 'Müller-Scheld handed in his Ufa survey. It is entirely inadequate. He only gabs about art, and this in a very childish way. No clue about the organisation. Mission not completed. A loser!' Fröhlich, E. (ed.) (1987) *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Sämtliche Fragmente. Teil I: Aufzeichnungen 1924–1941*, vol. 3. Munich: Institut für Zeitgeschichte, p. 268.
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26. Fröhlich (1987), vol. 3, p. 535.
27. Fröhlich (1987), vol. 4, p. 51. On the quarrels between Goebbels and Müller-Scheld regarding the Film Academy, see Le Faucheur (2012), especially chapter 8.
28. RA, Archives of HAVP, L0091. Cf. Bohn, R. (2000) *Reichskommissariat Norwegen. 'Nationalsozialistische Neuordnung' und Kriegswirtschaft*. Beiträge zur Militärgeschichte 54. München: Oldenbourg, p. 131.
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31. On Müller's youth and later role in the Nazification of Hesse, see Friedel (2010) pp. 53–82. See also Bonavita, P. (2004a) Die Karriere des Frankfurter NS-Studentenführers Georg-Wilhelm Müller, pp. 441–460 in *Nassauische Annalen*, 115 (May 2004); and Klee (2007), p. 379.
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34. *Frankfurter Volksblatt*, 21 October 1935, p. 2. Cited in Friedel (2010), p. 71.

35. Fröhlich (1987), vol. 3, p. 1013.
36. Friedel (2010), p. 78.
37. Goebbels, J. & G.-W. Müller (eds.) (1939) *Wetterleuchten. Aufsätze aus der Kampfzeit*, vol. 2. Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, F. Eher Nachf.; and Müller, G.-W. (1940) *Das Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*. Schriften zum Staatsaufbau, 43. Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt.
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40. At its peak, HAVP had about 150 staff members. RA, Archives of HAVP, L0091.
41. BArch, R 55, 216 HAVP 1940–1944, Fiche 3/5.
42. Bohn (2000), p. 64.
43. Fröhlich (1987), vol. 4, p. 121.
44. Bonavita (2004a), pp. 459–460.
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48. BArch, R 55, 216 HAVP 1940–1944, Fiche 3/5.
49. Müller (1940).
50. BArch, R 55, 21253 Präsident der Deutschen Filmakademie, W. Müller-Scheld to J. Goebbels 16 December 1933. In German original: 'Passive Naturen sind mir seit diesen Jahren ein Greuel.'
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52. RA, Reich Commissariat, HAVP, 101.
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56. Hagen (2018), p. 299. Cf. Ringnes, op.cit.
57. Seip (1946).
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67. See Kreimeier (1996), p. 177.
68. Lukacs, J. (2001) *The Last European War. September 1939–December 1941.* New Haven & London: Yale University Press, p. 392.
69. For a more detailed analysis of Leif Sinding's role and his relationship to Müller and Müller-Scheld, see the chapter by Thomas V. H. Hagen in this book.
70. Leif Sinding (1944) Norwegen, pp. 180–182 in *Inter-Film: Blätter der Internationalen Filmkammer*, 10, p. 181.
71. Sinding (1944), p. 182.
72. Martin (2016), p. 203. Note that Martin prefers the translation *State Film Directorate* to the *National Film Directorate*; the latter is otherwise used throughout this chapter and in Hagen's chapter on Sinding in this book. In other words, we are talking about the same institution.
73. Martin (2016), p. 203.
74. See Hagen (2018), p. 85.
75. Martin (2016), pp. 203–204; see also Sørenssen, B. (2007) From Will to Reality: Norwegian Film During the Nazi Occupation, 1940–45, pp. 220–230 in Vande Winkel & Welch (2007), p. 229.
76. See Hagen (2018), pp. 78–79.
77. Martin (2016), p. 114.
78. BArch R 109 I/1369, memo to Bavaria directors Erich Walter Herbell and Dr Hellmuth Keil from 12 September 1939.
79. Cited in Martin (2016), p. 149.
80. Martin (2016), pp. 149–150.
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83. National Library, Oslo, Archive of *Kommunale kinematografers landsforbund* (Municipal Cinematographs Association, KKL), Statistical information 1940–45. See also the foreign sales documents by Ufa (Verleih-Abrechnung) for Kommunenes Filmcentral A/S, Alliance Film A/S and Ufa-Film A/S Oslo, BArch R 109/I 1182.
84. *Fædrelandsvennen*, 15 June 1943.
85. *Fædrelandsvennen*, 13 February 1945; Hagen (2018), pp. 91 and 114.
86. See the foreign sales documents by Ufa (Verleih-Abrechnung) for Kommunenes Filmcentral A/S, Alliance Film A/S and Ufa-Film A/S Oslo, BArch R 109/I 1182 for the months June, July, and August.
87. Memo from Ufa to Heiberg's film company Berlin-Film G.m.b.H, 15 June 1943, BArch R 109/I 2783.
88. See Hanssen, B.-E. (2014) *Glamour for Goebbels. Historien om Kirsten Heiberg*. Oslo: Aschehoug, pp. 193–194.
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90. Vande Winkel, R (2017) Film Distribution in Occupied Belgium (1940–1944): German Film Politics and its Implementation by the 'Corporate' Organisations and the Film Guild, pp. 46–78 in *Tijdschrift voor Mediageschiedenis*, 20 (1), pp. 52–53.
91. BArch, R 109 II/15; progress report (*Sachstandsreferat*) from 15 November 1944. Cited in Drewniak, B. (1987) *Der deutsche Film 1938–1945*. Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, p. 694. See also documents (minutes, memos, reports) of the German film business' foreign advisory committee from June 1944 to March 1945, BArch, R 109 II, R 109-III/8.
92. Drewniak (1987), p. 748.
93. Hagen (2018), p. 88.
94. See, for example, the reports by the Kristiansand branch for July 1944, RA, RK, HAVP, 97.
95. Toeplitz, J. (1992) *Geschichte des Films: 1939–1945*, vol. 4, Berlin: Henschel, p. 299. Cited in Drewniak (1987), p. 749.
96. Evensmo, S. (1992) *Det store tivoli. Film og kino i Norge*. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, p. 415; and Hagen (2018), p. 415.
97. See Hagen (2018), p. 430.
98. BArch, R 109 II/15; progress report (Sachstandsreferat) from 13 October 1944; and BArch, R 109 III/23; minutes (Niederschrift) from 2 March 1945. Cited in Drewniak (1987), p. 749.
99. See Hagen (2018), chapters 6–8.
100. Minutes of the Ufa board meeting of 2 March 1945, BArch, R109/I 1716a (UFA), p. 10.

101. Sørenssen (2007), p. 224.
102. See Hagen (2018), p. 274.
103. See Bruland, B. (2017) *Holocaust i Norge. Registrering, deportasjon, til-intetgjørelse*. Oslo: Dreyers forlag.
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105. For the situation in Belgium, see Vande Winkel, R. (2007) German Influence on Belgian Cinema: From Low-Profile Presence to Downright Colonialism, in Vande Winkel & Welch (2007), p. 82; for the situation in the Netherlands, see Schiweck, I. (2007) Dutch-German Film Relations under German Pressure and Nazi Occupation, 1933–45, in Vande Winkel & Welch (2007), p. 212.

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CHAPTER 4

Jan Vanderheyden and Edith Kiel: 'Leading' the Belgian Film Sector While Taking Orders from the German Propaganda Service

Roel Vande Winkel

Through the small country of Belgium runs a linguistic and cultural frontier, which separates the Dutch-speaking Flanders (in the north—the Dutch dialect spoken there is typically called 'Flemish') from the French-speaking Wallonia (to the south). In the first half of the twentieth century, the Belgian elite, including the bourgeoisie of the Flemish-speaking cities, was mainly Francophone. This Francophone ascendancy, which influenced cultural life and film preferences, also explains how French had become the majority language of the Belgian capital of Brussels, which is geographically located in the centre of Flanders. In the 1930s, Belgian cinemas, which numbered between 800 and 1100, boasted a total seating capacity of at least 500,000 for a population of 8–8.5 million people. This high density of cinemas made Belgium, which produced less than fifty feature films in 1929–1939, a market of interest for film-exporting countries. The Belgian film market was in large measure dominated by American

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P. Skopal, R. Vande Winkel (eds.), *Film Professionals in Nazi-Occupied Europe*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61634-2_4

and French companies.[1] In many respects, these companies considered Belgium an extension of the French film market.

What made Belgium particularly interesting for foreign companies was the fact that the Belgian government imposed few rules on the film sector. There was no general film censorship, except for the obligation—despised by many film distributors—to submit films that required the stamp 'children allowed' to a controlling committee. In other words, censorship was not obligatory, but anyone wanting to show their film to audiences below the age of sixteen years old needed to have the film approved. Such approval often came with the obligation to cut particular scenes. In comparison with many other countries, Belgium therefore had a liberal film policy, although this was somewhat challenged by groups such as the Catholic Film Action (in Dutch: *Katholieke Filmactie*; in French: *Centre Catholique d'Action Cinématographique*), which wanted the right to determine which films were suitable for the public or not.[2] However, the lack of government regulation was a double-edged sword. In the absence of rules, the film industry had to regulate itself—and sector proved unable to do so. Professional organisations were unable to reach generally applicable agreements, for example, about the rental conditions for films or the minimum admission price for cinemas. In the 1930s, competition among distributors and exhibitors was fierce. Some therefore advocated for the creation of a film 'corporation', in which distributors and exhibitors would try to solve problems together. Such a corporation would eventually come into being: but not spontaneously, rather at the instigation of the German military government that was installed in the summer of 1940.

This chapter will analyse the implementation of German film policy in occupied Belgium (1940–1944) by focusing on Jan Vanderheyden (Fig. 4.1), a Flemish film distributor and producer, who, as the formal 'Leader' (Dutch: *Leider*; French: *Chef*) of Belgian professional organisations, helped implement and execute the German film policy. Attention will also be given to his life and business partner Edith Kiel.[3]

Jan Vanderheyden and Edith Kiel in the 1930s[4]

Jan Vanderheyden was born in Antwerp (Belgium) in 1890 (Fig. 4.2). He worked for the British branch of the French film company Pathé (London) and for the French branch of the American company Universal (Paris) before heading for Brussels around 1920, where he managed Soleil Levant Films, a company that secured exploitation rights to international films for

Filmstudiën
1e Jaargang
Nummer 4 - October 1944
Verschijnt maandelijks.
Beheer en Red.: Secr. der K.F.A. Huidevetterstr. 30, Antw. T. 396.35
Spoorloos verdwenen: .... „ Janneman Van der Heyden "
BAYER
FILMG
Nest
« Wir danken seinem Führer... »
(Nadruk alleen toegelaten met bronvermelding)

Fig. 4.1 This caricature by Nest (unknown artist) was published by the magazine *Filmstudiën* in October 1944, when Belgium was largely liberated. At the bottom left of the picture is Adolf Hitler, who has a headache and is taking aspirin

(continued)

Fig. 4.1 (continued)
produced by the (German) Bayer factory. In the top right corner of the picture, we see the tanks of the Allies. Jan Vanderheyden flees away from the Allies and towards Hitler. Under his arms he holds film reels and files from the Film Guild. The caption mockingly mentions that Jan Vanderheyden, who is thanking his 'Führer', has disappeared without a trace. (Cartoon originally published on the cover of the fourth issue of the Belgian *Filmstudiën* journal in October 1944. [Source: Vande Winkel Private Collection])

Fig. 4.2 Promotional picture of Jan Vanderheyden. (Letterenhuis, Antwerpen [Belgium])

the Belgian market. Around 1927–1928, the company became *International Film Distributors* (IFD), under Vanderheyden's complete ownership. The company specialised in distributing European film productions. Vanderheyden travelled extensively, searching for good pictures and, if necessary, organised the French dubbing and/or subtitling of

recently purchased films. During these business trips, he regularly stayed in Berlin, where he met Edith Kiel in January 1929.

Edith Kiel, born in 1904 in the Lankwitz neighbourhood of Berlin, was at that time a divorced, independent woman with a child born out of wedlock. In the mid-1920s, she was introduced to the film world by her school friend Lily Pape, who had started acting under the stage name Lilian Harvey. Kiel, who had studied French at school and was a good writer, took a job at the Ufa company in Berlin. She assisted in the production of 'multiple language films' such as *La Nuit est à nous / Die Nacht gehört uns* (*The Night Belongs to Us*, 1930), for which director Carl Froelich and his assistant director Henry Roussell worked with a German and a French cast respectively. Kiel, smart and eager to learn, acquired the basic knowledge and skills of film production while at this job. Vanderheyden and Kiel fell head over heels in love and would stay together until Vanderheyden's death. They spent most of their lives together in Belgium, but would never marry because Vanderheyden already had a wife, who was estranged from him and lived in Paris. Officially, Kiel was Vanderheyden's secretary, but to friends and acquaintances, they never hid the fact that they were living together and co-raising Kiel's daughter.

Kiel soon became a driving force in IFD. She and Vanderheyden earned a nice income from distributing German operetta films such as *Zwei Herzen im Dreivierteltakt* (*Two Hearts in Waltz Time*, 1930), but they wanted to aim higher. In 1934, they took a leap into the deep end with the film adaptation of *De Witte* (*Whitey*), a 1920 bestselling novel set in rural Flanders by Flemish author Ernest Claes. At that time, nobody had yet been successful at producing and distributing a Flemish sound film, so expertise had to be found elsewhere. Exteriors were shot in Flanders, but all studio scenes were filmed at the Johannisthal studios near Berlin and the entire crew was German.

Whitey (1934) became a tremendous success. Vanderheyden served as producer, and Kiel as scriptwriter. Kiel and Vanderheyden managed to attract a lot of media coverage while the film was still in pre-production, for instance, by staging a competition to find a suitable boy to play the lead role. At that stage, it was already announced that the film would be directed by Willem Benoy, a Flemish stage director, who would also act in the film.[5] Benoy had never stood on a film set before, though, and already on the first shooting day, he realised that he was unable to direct—and so was Vanderheyden. There was only one solution: Kiel had to direct the film. This created a promotional problem, however. The film had to be

promoted as the first truly Flemish sound film, a product of Flemish entrepreneurial spirit. And now producer Jan Vanderheyden would have to admit that the film had been directed by a foreigner? A German? A woman? With whom he was living? And jointly caring for her illegitimate child? While he was still married to someone else? None of this was acceptable in Catholic Flanders in the 1930s. Kiel, who was involved in the whole process, including handling press and promotion, agreed that Benoy and above all Vanderheyden had to be credited as the fathers of this success.[6]

The success of *Whitey* convincingly demonstrated that in even a market as small as Flanders, domestic film production was viable and even profitable, as long as the general public was targeted and the budget was kept tight. Jan Vanderheyden and Edith Kiel had understood this very well. IFD continued to distribute foreign productions, but henceforth focused primarily on producing and distributing its own films. A lot of attention was paid to consolidating 'Jan Vanderheyden' as a brand name. IFD did not change its name—presumably because it was an administratively cumbersome procedure—but clearly shifted the label 'Jan Vanderheyden Film' to the forefront. Vanderheyden was portrayed as a successful entrepreneur who had rolled up his sleeves to give the Flemish people Flemish films and singlehandedly create a new genre, while the creative input of his partner remained underexposed. Edith Kiel, who helped brand Vanderheyden's image, seems to have had no problem with her role in the shadows. In the next years, Kiel and Vanderheyden filmed in Berlin, Amsterdam, and Brussels before opening their own film studio in Antwerp in 1939.

In six and a half years (1934–1940), Kiel and Vanderheyden made ten feature films (Fig. 4.3). Proper film journalism—which actually reviewed films instead of just summarising them—was still in its infancy at the time, but Flemish journalists who took the medium seriously repeatedly complained about the lack of quality in these films. Indeed, Kiel and Vanderheyden targeted the broadest possible audiences and made lowbrow films, often in a rural setting, with simple storylines that mixed comedy with some romance—and none of their work was done with very great skill. The technical and artistic qualities also left much to be desired. There was no budget for proper backdrop scenery and the films had to be made so quickly (since time was limited, as was film stock) that the quality of the actors' performances was very uneven. Kiel and Vanderheyden were unable to rectify such problems by properly directing their actors and hardly ever organised rehearsals. In short, it is not difficult to understand why cinephile journalists lamented their lack of ambition.[7] Nevertheless, audiences did not seem to

Fig. 4.3 Promotional picture of Edith Kiel (left), next to Jan Vanderheyden, in a small film studio in Brussels in 1936. The press was invited to attend the filming of interior scenes for *De Wonderdoktoor* (*The Miracle Doctor*, 1936). (Ons Land, 20 June 1936 [Vande Winke Private Collection])

mind. 'Jan Vanderheyden Film' became a successful label as the films were screened all over Flanders and sold many tickets. A major factor contributing to this success must have been the fact that there were literally no competitors. In the Francophone market, Gaston Schoukens competed with several other Belgian directors, who all made French-language sound films, often also comedies. But in Flanders, Kiel and Vanderheyden were the only ones who made commercially viable products in Flemish. (As Catherine Fowler has noted in her very interesting essay, the films made by Schoukens, Kiel, and Vanderheyden were all so strongly aimed at local audiences that they were practically unexportable.[8]) The trade press (i.e. magazines published by and for Belgian film distributors and exhibitors) maintained a strong sense of admiration for the ongoing production of IFD. Vanderheyden was widely recognised as an important figure and was even awarded the title of Knight of the Order of Leopold II in April 1937.

The Belgian Film Sector Under German Control[9]

Belgium was invaded on 10 May 1940 and King Leopold III capitulated on 28 May, without the approval of his government, which went into exile in France and later in Great Britain. After some hesitation, Adolf Hitler imposed a *Militärverwaltung* (Military Administration) and not a *Zivilverwaltung* (Civil Administration) as he had done in the Netherlands. Hitler did so because he was undecided about the political future he envisaged for Belgium after the 'final victory'. The press in occupied Belgium was not allowed to touch that subject or to speculate, for instance, about incorporating Belgium partially or entirely into the Greater German *Reich*. At the same time, Hitler ordered that the Flemish people should receive some preferential treatment, because they, unlike the Francophone Belgians, were of 'Germanic' rather than 'Romance' origin. One result of this Flemish-friendly policy (*Flamenpolitik*) was that Flemish prisoners of war were gradually allowed to return home, while their Francophone compatriots remain imprisoned. In occupied Belgium, another concrete consequence of this policy of bringing Flanders closer to Germany was that German films had to be screened in the original version. Prints were subtitled, but unlike in Brussels and Wallonia, cinemas were not permitted to screen French-dubbed versions of German films. There was, however, no attempt to create division between Flemish and Francophone film professionals by creating separate professional organisations.

The task of administering and reorganising the Belgian film sector was entrusted to the *Gruppe Film* (Film Group) of the *Propaganda-Abteilung Belgien* (Propaganda Division Belgium, PAB) (Fig. 4.4). The PAB was directly responsible to the higher echelons of the Wehrmacht, but worked closely with the German propaganda ministry. The PAB was responsible for matters that were not just of propagandistic but also of economic value. One of its crucial objectives was to give German film a dominant position in occupied Belgium. The Film Group was mainly focused on controlling the film distributors and the exhibitors. Since the PAB had no intention of stimulating local film production, it is quite peculiar that precisely the most active film producer in Belgium would lend support to this German policy.

In order to control the Belgian film sector, the occupying forces decided to work with Belgian professional organisations that already existed before the war. At the beginning of August 1940, all film distributors were forced to join the *Chambre Syndicale Belge de la Cinématographie et des Industries*

Fig. 4.4 Poster for the Italian movie *Fari nella nebbia* (*Headlights in the Fog*, 1942). Jan Vanderheyden distributed the German-dubbed version *Scheinwerfer im Nebel* in Belgium, but under a more romantic title: *Ik wacht op u* (*I will wait for you*). (Roel Vande Winkel collection [KU Leuven])

qui s'y rapportent (Syndicate Chamber of Cinematography and Related Industries). Likewise, all cinema owners were forced to join the *Vereeniging van Belgische Kinemabestuurders—Association des Directeurs de Théâtres Cinématographiques de Belgique* (Union of Belgian Cinema Managers). Before the war, membership in such organisations had been voluntary, but now one was required to be a member in order to be allowed to work in the sector. Membership requests had to be approved by the PAB, which could withdraw memberships at any time. This way, both professional associations were used by the PAB to impose their will on the sector. The many orders that the PAB would give in the following months and years were only exceptionally published as official decrees from the military government. Instead, the PAB preferred to have such measures promulgated by the Syndicate Chamber of Film Distributors and/or by the Union of Belgian Cinema Managers. The two professional organisations thus acted as a façade for the German administration.

The Syndicate Chamber of Film Distributors and the Union of Belgian Cinema Managers often encouraged their members to work together in 'corporate spirit'. In theory, corporatism offered solution to all problems, since film exhibitors and distributors working within one corporation would fraternally resolve all disputes. In reality, this corporate model was used to force everyone into line. After all, it was not the professional organisations themselves, but the German authorities who decided what the sector should or should not do. The system was as simple as it was effective. The PAB forced the corporate organisations to issue numerous guidelines, large and small, that determined the actions and omissions of the entire film sector. Within the organisations, these guidelines had the character of laws. Anyone who did not follow the guidelines was expelled from the organisation in question by 'disciplinary committees'. Since it was no longer allowed to work in the film sector without organisation membership, expulsion was equivalent to being banned from all professional activities. This created a form of parallel justice: individuals and companies could be punished with fines and temporary or permanent closures without any intervention by the Belgian labour court or any other courts.

Within this system, the PAB drastically reformed the Belgian film sector. American and British films—not to mention films by Jewish directors or films with Jewish actors—were banned in the summer of 1940. Other measures were introduced more slowly. Jewish-owned distribution companies and cinemas were closed down or confiscated. Belgian film

censorship was made superfluous and was eventually abolished. A variety of measures were taken to push smaller Belgian film distributors out of the market. Of the more than 110 film distributors that were active in Belgium before the German invasion, less than 20 remained in the spring of 1941. By drastically reducing the supply on the market, a gap was created, which the PAB then tried to fill as much as possible with German films. Nevertheless, there were so many cinemas and the demand for new films was so high that the PAB could not prevent French film from also capitalising on the situation. The cinema sector was also radically reformed, resulting in the forced closure of cinemas that the PAB considered too small, too unprofitable, or unsuitable for any other reason.

Most of the directives and regulations that introduced these reforms were written or dictated by the PAB. Nevertheless, they were usually signed or ratified by the Belgian board members of the corporate organisations. It was therefore essential for the PAB that these board members were sufficiently accommodating. Some Belgians cooperated effectively, while those who protested or were considered undesirable by the PAB were replaced. The Syndicate Chamber, which had been chaired by Jan Vanderheyden since July 1940 (see below), cooperated relatively well. A small problem arose in July 1941, when the directors of a number of distribution companies that were forced to close down, tried to remove Vanderheyden and his management board, but the PAB nipped this resistance in the bud. It was argued that since the distribution companies had in fact been closed down, they were therefore no longer considered members of the Syndicate Chamber and thus were no longer permitted to vote on the management board of the organisation. This logic was accepted by the remaining members.

By contrast, the Union of Belgian Cinema Managers, chaired by André Ridelle, was more resistant to the German authorities. In the summer of 1941, the General Assembly and the Board of Directors—which had the power to assert rights based on the pre-war statutes—did not agree to the measures 'requested' by the PAB. The PAB and the military government intervened drastically. On 25 October 1941, an all new organisation was established, the *Vereeniging der Kinemabestuurders van België—Association des Directeurs de Cinémas de Belgique* (Association of Belgian Cinema Managers). Subsequently, the Military Board issued an ordinance, which replaced the pre-war organisation with the new one. The members were simply transferred from the old Union to the new association, which had a different president (Emile Van Tuyckom) and a new management board.

Those who were not satisfied with this could leave the association, but, of course, this meant no longer being able to practise their profession.

In July 1943, the Syndicate Chamber and the new Association of Belgian Cinema Managers were brought together under one umbrella organisation known as the *Filmgilde – Guilde du Film* (Film Guild). Jan Vanderheyden became the 'Leader' of the Film Guild. This merger was covered extensively by the Belgian press that portrayed Vanderheyden as the primary figure of the Belgian film industry.

How much room for manoeuvre did the Belgian board members of the above-mentioned organisations have? Although it seems likely that the PAB repeatedly exerted pressure on them, no one was forced to remain in office. When André Ridelle refused to obey the orders he received (see above), he was removed from office, but he was not harmed physically nor financially. After the liberation, he would again take up a prominent position in the Belgian film world. For Jan Vanderheyden, who remained in office until the end of the occupation, things would be very different. But, as the example of Ridelle demonstrates, Vanderheyden was not forced to follow the path he took. It was a choice.

Jan Vanderheyden as a 'Leader'[10]

Vanderheyden had become a household name in the 1930s but he did not play a significant role in any of the Belgian professional film organisations until March 1940. At that time, a number of Belgian film producers joined forces to form a group that attached itself to the Syndicate Chamber. This affiliated group was led by Gaston Schoukens (as president), with Henri Storck as secretary and Jan Vanderheyden himself as vice-president.[11] Just two months later, Germany invaded Belgium. The first contacts between the PAB and the Syndicate Chamber in June 1940 had shown that the PAB was interested in the Syndicate Chamber, because it could be used to control Belgian film distributors. However, the PAB had no interest in the affiliated group of producers, so they were pushed aside, at least in their capacity as film producers. Many of them, like Vanderheyden, were also distributing films and therefore remained members of the Syndicate Chamber. After former president of the Chamber, Marcel Coppens (director of the United Artists branch in Brussels), had fled Belgium after the German invasion, Vanderheyden was put forward as new president by his colleagues. Given his knowledge of the German language and his experiences in the German film world (as a producer and distributor),

Vanderheyden was indeed an obvious choice. The fact that his 'secretary' Edith Kiel was German and could more easily establish contacts with the PAB or with other German authorities was also an advantage. For example, in 1940, it was very difficult for civilians to travel through Belgium, since bridges and transport infrastructure had been damaged (or blown up) in the previous weeks. Getting travel permission was also difficult. This made it impossible to transport film prints from the capital of Brussels (where the distribution companies were located) to other cities (where cinemas needed new titles). But already on 11 June 1940, the cinema managers of Antwerp were able to set up an alternative system, using a bus to transport films in and out of the capital. They were able to do this so quickly, because Edith Kiel secured the permission for them.[12]

If Vanderheyden was indeed reluctant to become president of the Syndicate Chamber, as Kiel claimed afterwards, his opposition was short-lived. He accepted the invitation in June 1940—which should not come as a surprise. Between autumn of 1939 and the summer of 1940, Germany had inflicted a crushing defeat on its opponents. In the west, only Great Britain still offered significant resistance. In the east, Hitler was protected by a non-aggression treaty with the Soviet Union. On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, the United States still maintained its neutrality. At that time, many people were convinced that continental Europe remain part of a German-led 'New Order' for a long to come.

It is not surprising that Kiel, Vanderheyden, and many others were convinced that Germany would take the lead in the European film sector. And who in Belgium could have considered themselves better suited to reap the benefits of this than Jan Vanderheyden and Edith Kiel? The latter, as a German citizen, had always kept a low profile—but now things had changed. For Kiel and Vanderheyden, the future appeared bright and they now considered themselves members of the new cultural vanguard, as is evidenced in a diary entry by their close friend Ernest Claes, the author of *Whitey*. After bumping into the couple in August 1940, he noted in his diary that Kiel was wearing a swastika and added: 'They have now both become 100 percent German, Edith strutting like a peacock, she now feels like a boss in our country and is behaving protectively [towards me].'[13]

In her memoirs, Kiel distances herself from Hitler and claims to have never had any sympathy for the Führer and his party. There may, in fact, be some truth to this, considering that she and Vanderheyden also had several friends or acquaintances who were Jewish and who could expect nothing good from National Socialism. But Kiel was a businesswoman and

if she felt it was good for business to affiliate herself with a certain group, then she did so. Thus, in March 1941, Kiel joined the *Nationalsozialistische Arbeiterpartei* (Nazi party, NSDAP) as party member number 8128477—a fact that is not mentioned in her memoirs.[14]

In retrospect, it is tempting to paint Kiel as a harpy, who dragged Vanderheyden along and lured him into collaborating with the Germans, and getting entangled in a game, whose rules he did not quite understand. However, such a conclusion is simplistic and inconsistent with Vanderheyden's temperament, as revealed in interviews with him (conducted before and during the war) and in testimonies from people who knew him well.[15] Vanderheyden could be very friendly and warm to his loved ones, but could also react with great temperament when things did not turn out the way he wanted. He was a proud and vain man, who had started believing in the image he and Kiel had created. In the 1930s, he had felt personally offended by the criticism of some film reviewers, but nevertheless considered himself a man with a mission, who—as a pioneer of Flemish film—was better suited than anyone to steer the Belgian film industry in the right direction. Before the war, he had repeatedly lamented the lack of government support for Belgian film producers. In the summer of 1940, when the members of the Syndicate Chamber asked him to become their president, he saw an opportunity.

If Vanderheyden was hoping that the German authorities would be more inclined than the Belgian government to support a large-scale Belgian or at least Flemish film production, it must have quickly become clear to him that this was out of the question. Nevertheless, he did not jump ship. Why? As explained in more detail below, Kiel and Vanderheyden were able to continue their feature film production while everybody else was forced to stop. The IDF company—which ceased using its English name, instead always referring to itself as *Jan Vanderheyden Films*—belonged to the increasingly shrinking group of film distributors that was allowed to remain in business. All of this must have contributed to Vanderheyden staying at his post throughout the war. Furthermore, Vanderheyden was certainly not insensitive to the fact that, especially after the creation of the Film Guild, he was generally portrayed in the press as the 'Leader' of Belgian film. He also reinforced that image by publishing editorials and articles in the corporate *CINEMA* journal that all distributors and exhibitors were required to subscribe to, in which he laid out his vision.[16] Not surprisingly, this vision never coloured outside the German lines. Vanderheyden was also able to enlarge his international network,

when by virtue of his position as president of the Syndicate Chamber, he became the Belgian delegate to the general council of the *Internationale Filmkammer* (International Film Chamber, IFK), an organisation through which Germany sought to regulate the import and export of films to its advantage. This also allowed Vanderheyden to go abroad—which was exceptional for civilians in this time of war—and to take Kiel with him, for example, when they travelled together to the Venice Film Festival in 1941.

It must be kept in mind that not every directive issued by the corporate organisations was bad by definition. For example, a vocational training course for projectionists was finally put in place. In some cases, the Film Guild or its predecessors succeeded in enacting measures that were not prescribed nor even desired by the PAB. As mentioned above, in 1940, the Syndicate Chamber had been forced to formally abolish its subgroup of producers. But already in January 1941, Vanderheyden announced that the Syndicate Chamber would create a 'production group' that brought together film producers, film creators (a broad term that included directors as well as scriptwriters, set designers, etc.), film studios, and film developing laboratories. Within this group, the producers were represented by Schoukens, who had been president of the abolished, pre-war production group.[17] In a (secret) report, the PAB admitted that the creation of this group was not its initiative, but justified its existence (vis-à-vis Berlin) by claiming that this group would allow them to keep a closer eye on local film producers.[18] It is clear that the new production group was instigated by Jan Vanderheyden, who, together with Kiel, had no intention of halting their pre-war production momentum.

Producing Films[19]

During the occupation, Kiel and Vanderheyden released five more feature films. *Wit is troef* (*The Trump Card Is White*, 1940) had been made before the occupation, but had its premiere screening on 9 May 1940, literally on the eve of the German invasion, and was only properly released in November of that year. It was followed by *Janssens en Peeters, dikke vrienden* (*Janssens and Peeters Reconciled*, 1940), *Veel geluk Monika* (*Good Luck, Monica!*, 1941), *Een aardig geval* (*A Happy Coincidence*, 1941), and *Antoon de Fierefluiter* (*Anton, the Village Casanova*, 1942). Kiel received her first credit as a director for *A Happy Coincidence*.

Before the German invasion, Kiel and Vanderheyden had produced ten feature films in seven years (1934–1940), from *Whitey* to *The Trump Card*

Is White. In German-occupied Belgium, they would produce four more features in two and a half years (1940–1942). This production rate did not even come close to their 1939 plan of releasing a new film every two months after they had acquired their own studio. Compared to their compatriots, however, they were incredibly productive. As mentioned above, Kiel and Vanderheyden had never had any significant competition in Flanders. Now their competition on the French-speaking side was eliminated as full-length film production there came to a virtual standstill under the occupation.

Director Gaston Schoukens had made fun of the previous German occupation (the First World War) in his film *Gardons notre sourire* (*Let's Keep Smiling*, 1937) and had also produced a pre-war propaganda film commissioned by the Belgian Ministry of Defence emphasising that the Belgian army was ready to defend itself against foreign attacks (*Ceux qui veillent—They Who Watch Over Us*, 1939). For obvious reasons, these films remained out of circulation during the current occupation, but in 1941, Schoukens was allowed to release an updated version of his *C'était le bon temps* (*Those Were the Days*, 1936) as well as to premiere an unreleased pre-war film (*Zig-Zag*, 1941). Making a new feature film was, however, out of the question, for Schoukens and for virtually anyone else. Apart from Kiel and Vanderheyden, no one was able to release a new Belgian feature film. The PAB was not inclined to support Belgian film production and therefore did not grant permission to make new feature films to anyone except Kiel and Vanderheyden.

In August 1941, PAB noted in a secret report, about the films Kiel and Vanderheyden had made so far in German-occupied Belgium: 'These Flemish films, despite all the honest efforts of the director and despite the most extensive support of the PAB Film Group, are artistically and technically so far below average, that they do not even come close to meeting the requirements that one may ask from films as cultural assets.'[20] The fact that Vanderheyden and Kiel were nevertheless allowed to make these films (and a new one in 1942) can only be explained as a reward for their support of the PAB. Nevertheless, at the end of 1942, the favourable position enjoyed by Kiel and Vanderheyden came to an end, at least as far as the production of feature films was concerned.

The only feature film with a proper budget to be shot on German-occupied Belgian soil was a production of the German company Terra-Filmkunst: *Wenn die Sonne wieder scheint* (*When the Sun Shines Again*, 1943), a film adaptation of Stijn Streuvels' novel *De Vlaschaard* directed

Fig. 4.5 An advertisement for all the 'Jan Vanderheyden' productions that are available in German-occupied Belgium. The company was still officially named *International Film Distributors* (IFD), but that English label was no longer used in public. (*Cinema Jaarboek* 1942 *Annuaire du cinema* (Brussels, 1942). Collections of the Belgian Royal Film Archive [Cinematek])

by Boleslaw Barlog (Fig. 4.5). Vanderheyden, who as 'Leader' of the Film Guild attended two gala screenings of the film in the summer of 1943, must have had mixed feelings about the fact that a German film crew had the opportunity to film a quintessential Flemish novel on a budget he could only dream of. The movie was made in a manner very similar to how Kiel and Vanderheyden had shot *Whitey* in 1934: outdoor filming in Flanders and indoor filming in German studios—even the cameraman, Ewald Daub, was the same.[21]

In occupied Belgium, as in every German-occupied country, film exhibitors were forced to adopt the German structure of film programmes, which consisted of three components: a newsreel (the Belgian version of *Ufa's Foreign Weekly Newsreel* [*Auslandstonwoche*]), a short film (often a documentary, also typically called a 'cultural film' in accordance with the German term *Kulturfilm*) and a full-length feature film. Kiel and Vanderheyden must have figured out quickly that the obligatory structure

of film programmes made it profitable for them to produce their own shorts, which they could distribute together with their feature films. In 1941–1943, Kiel and Vanderheyden released eight self-produced short films. Six of these were comedies that featured the same characters: Mr Dingemans (played by Flemish actor Charles Janssens) and Ms Babbel (played by Flemish actress Co Flower). The films of the *Mijnheer Dingemans & Madame Babbel* series, which have only partially survived, are very interesting because the stories were set in German-occupied Belgium and referenced current living conditions such as wartime rationing and the black market. The production of these films had to be approved by the PAB. Since the films made fun of people who tried to smuggle rare goods or tried to procure things on the black market, they could be considered as educational films (propaganda movies) that warned against such behaviour in a humorous way. Comic shorts that touched on propagandistically, politically, and/or economically sensitive themes were also produced in Nazi Germany (the *Tran und Helle* series), in occupied France (the *Monsieur Girouette* series) and in the occupied Netherlands (see Egbert Barten's chapter on Jan Teunissen in this volume).

Kiel and Vanderheyden were not the only ones producing short films. Anyone who wanted to make such a film had to submit a screenplay to the PAB via a recognised producer (i.e. a member of the Syndicate Chamber) and of course also had to raise the necessary funds, which often meant finding a paying client or film distributor. Henri Storck thus worked on a number of short documentaries commissioned by the National Agricultural and Food Corporation, which were bundled together after the war as *Boerensymfonie—Symphonie paysanne* (*Peasant Symphony*, 1942–1944). Charles Dekeukeleire, Gaston Schoukens, and some lesser-known directors also managed to get permission to make one or more short documentaries. Case studies of the wartime films produced by Henri Storck and by *Flandria Film* have shown that Jan Vanderheyden was very actively involved in the supervision of these projects.[22] He truly acted as the leader of the organisations he fronted and saw to it that all the rules of the Syndicate Chamber and the later Film Guild were strictly adhered to. Of course, Vanderheyden had clear conflicts of interest, as both a person who oversaw production and a producer himself. But this also applied to a lesser extent to colleagues such as Schoukens and Storck, who held minor positions within the Film Guild in 1943–1944. (After the war, Storck would testify against Vanderheyden, claiming that Vanderheyden had

appointed him to that position against his will and without his prior knowledge.[23])

In April 1943, new measures were taken by the corporate organisations (which had not yet formally merged into the Film Guild) to stimulate the production of 'national cultural films'. A committee was created that would select a small number of 'valuable' new (previously unreleased) Belgian documentaries and award them with a certificate. Film distributors would then be obliged to include at least one documentary with such a certificate in their catalogue. This system may have been inspired by the German system of awarding tax reductions to films that had received certain labels of distinction (*Prädikate*). The system was not identical, but it did make it possible to increase the potential market for a film, without directly granting subsidies.

Just before these measures were announced, Kiel and Vanderheyden reorganised their business operations. On 25 March 1943, they established the new company *Jan Vanderheyden-Filmproductie*, with ownership split between them: Vanderheyden 51% and Kiel 49%. The company would focus on film production, film synchronisation, and film editing. The new *Jan Vanderheyden-Filmproductie* company silently took over the film studio of IFD, which was entirely owned by Vanderheyden and still publicly referred to as *Jan Vanderheyden Films*. At the same time, IFD changed its statutes: production activity was eliminated and the company was henceforth only responsible for the rental, purchase, and sale of films. The rationales behind these changes are clear: IFD was stripped down to a distribution company, while the production activities were moved to the new *Jan Vanderheyden-Filmproductie* enterprise. In August 1943, the new company announced the production of *Vlaanderen* (*Flanders*), a short documentary that would offer an overview of Flemish history. For the script, Kiel had reworked a text by Robert van Roosbroeck, member of the Flemish collaboration group DeVlag (*Deutsch-Vlämische Arbeitsgemeinschaft* or German-Flemish Working Group) and member of the Flemish SS (*Algemeene SS-Vlaanderen*). Incidentally, Van Roosbroeck had also been appointed chairman of the committee that was to determine the value of cultural films. Whether Vanderheyden asked him first to serve as committee chairman and later as scriptwriter or vice versa, the conflict of interests is clear. Preserved footage demonstrates that this was an extremely ambitious film by Kiel and Vanderheyden's standards, in which images of historic Flemish cities (Antwerp, Bruges, Ghent) were alternated with fairly well done reconstructions of historical events, filmed on

sets that had a greater production value than previous films. The film had not yet been completed when Belgium was liberated by the Allies in September 1944.

Financial Rewards and Public Recognition

In November 1941, novelist Ernest Claes paid a visit to Vanderheyden and Kiel in the offices of the Syndicate Chamber. In his diary, he wrote: 'Jan complains bitterly about how his films are criticised and then gets sentimental about the past. His films are doing well now and he's making good money.'[24] This quote is probably an early but correct reflection of the mixed feelings Vanderheyden must have had during the war years. On the one hand, he and Kiel prospered financially; on the other hand, he did not receive the unanimous recognition he had hoped for. The back catalogue of films they had built up before the war together with the new feature and short films they made in 1940–1943 were screened all over Flanders. It must be noted in this context that Kiel and Vanderheyden managed to secure exceptions to the March 1941 rule that forbid the re-releasing of films that had already been on the Belgian market prior to 1 June 1937. Exceptions to this prohibition could only be made for productions with 'a special or artistic value' and as the analysis of film programming in occupied Belgium illustrates, IFD apparently secured such exceptions for several films Kiel and Vanderheyden had released before June 1937.[25] Kiel and Vanderheyden were also able to export their films to the occupied Netherlands, where a strict import film policy and a virtual embargo on French films had created a scarcity in the distribution sector. Their new films entered the Dutch market, although *Anton, the Village Casanova* had to be renamed in order to avoid potential inferences to Anton Mussert, leader of the National Socialist Movement (NSB) in the Netherlands.

Vanderheyden's role within the corporate organisations also proved lucrative (Fig. 4.6). In addition to the remuneration and/or reimbursement of expenses (about which little is known), Vanderheyden mainly benefited from the international connections he established. As a Belgian representative within the International Film Chamber, he was involved in negotiations on the import of foreign (non-German) films, which were only admitted to Belgian territory per approval of the German authorities. As the president of the Syndicate Chamber and 'Leader' of the later Film Guild, he was involved in deciding which Belgian companies could import which films. Not surprisingly, Vanderheyden's own IFD was able to lay its

Fig. 4.6 In the Netherlands, the leader of the Dutch Film Guild (Jan Teunissen) protested against the 'decadent' Czech feature film *Noční motýl* (*Nocturnal Butterfly*, 1941), which was released in a German-dubbed version as *Der Nachtfalter* (see the chapter by Egbert Barten elsewhere in this book). In Belgium, the leader of the Belgian Film Guild (Jan Vanderheyden) distributed the film himself. (Roel Vande Winkel collection [KU Leuven])

hands on several new films. Czech, Hungarian, and Italian films were, with approval of the PAB, either directly bought or purchased through the German company *Transit-Film GmbH*. IFD distributed these films in Flanders, not in the original language, but in a German-dubbed version. For Francophone Belgium, the films were usually post-synchronised in French and distributed by another company.

Vanderheyden also enjoyed some degree of public recognition. His new films were reviewed favourably by the censored press. The occasional criticisms were phrased in a much more subtle way than before the war. When Vanderheyden celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of his film activities in April 1941—commemorating his start at Pathé in London in April 1916—the press paid him a lot of attention. On his appointment as leader of the Film Guild, he was once again extensively celebrated. Nevertheless, there was also outspoken criticism. This was mostly found in newspapers or journals that were published by Flemish collaboration movements. By far the strongest criticism was uttered by the influential film critic Jeanne de Bruyn in *Volk en Staat*, the newspaper published by the collaborationist *Vlaamsch Nationaal Verbond* (Flemish Nationalist Union, VNV). De Bruyn praised Vanderheyden as 'a great organizer, diligent worker and optimist through thick and thin', but also added that he did 'not possess the artistic talent required to make excellent films, or even mediocre, popular films, for that matter'.[26] She suggested that Storck or Dekeukeleire were much better filmmakers (something that most cinephiles would likely agree with) and that Vanderheyden was not competent to lead the Belgian 'film corporation'. She added: 'In cultural matters, Mr. Vanderheyden does not have half the vision he has in business matters, in which he really excels. We will therefore only have confidence in the future of our production when someone who is culturally well versed, who has an open mind and who is free of personal prejudices, is entrusted with the supervision of Flemish film production, from a general national and European perspective.'[27] Vanderheyden was hurt by de Bruyn's criticism and even complained to the PAB about her. Obviously, though, her assessment was accurate: Vanderheyden was not a visionary man who fought tooth and nail to find more German support for Belgian or Flemish film production. He was perfectly satisfied in his role as formal 'Leader', who adhered to the German guidelines, benefited financially, and was in the meantime able to produce more films than any other Belgian. All of this also suited the PAB very well.

End Game (Fig. 4.7)

In the summer of 1940, Jan Vanderheyden and Edith Kiel, like many others, firmly believed that Nazi Germany would win the war. They saw a 'business opportunity' and decided to take advantage of it. It is possible that, initially, they did not realise the consequences of their choice. But by the beginning of 1941 at the latest, it must have become clear to them that the German authorities had no interest whatsoever in supporting Belgian or Flemish film production. Clearly, the main objective was to enlarge the market position of German cinema in Belgium, which required banning hundreds of films and closing many cinemas and distribution houses. As the formal leader of one of the 'corporate' associations, Vanderheyden was required to help implement repressive German

PRIX DU NUMERO : 5 FRANCS

MARDI 27 NOVEMBRE 1945

L'Hebdomadaire Indépendant du Cinéma

Cinéjournal

TÉLÉPRESSE

Directeur : H. DUMONT (Herdu). Bureaux : 44, Bd Lambermont, Bruxelles.

Pas plus que les Anglais les Belges ne veulent voir projeter les films réalisés par les nazis, les fascistes et les valets de la trahison. De la dignité, de la décence, s. v. p! Respectons la mémoire de ceux qui sont morts pour nous ! !

UN SCANDALE !

Les films du traitre *réalisés sous la protection des bayonnettes boches,* VONDERHEYDEN ne peuvent être distribués et projetés sur nos écrans

Fig. 4.7 November 1945. Vanderheyden and Kiel were still in Germany, when some Belgian businessmen acquired the rights to their films and started exhibiting them again. The Belgian trade press protested, saying that it is 'a scandal' that the films of 'Vonderheyden', which had been 'produced under the protection of German bayonets' were available again. They called for a total ban of films made by 'Nazi, fascists and the servants of treason'. (*Cinéjournal*, 27 November 1945. Collections of the Belgian Royal Film Archive [Cinematek])

policies, yet this did not prompt him to take a step back. On the contrary, he embraced his role and eventually assumed the most prominent position within the Belgian Film Guild. According to her memoirs, Kiel helped him establish contacts within the PAB. She did not play a formal role, but according to post-war testimonies, Vanderheyden consulted her before taking any important decision.[28] In exchange for their cooperation, Vanderheyden and Kiel received a number of advantages. Not only were they allowed to continue making feature films in Belgium until 1942, but they were also granted the distribution rights to a number of foreign films, which proved very lucrative. When the German occupation came to an end, the preferential position that Kiel and Vanderheyden enjoyed would disappear. But they decided not to wait for that moment and took action as the end of the occupation became increasingly imminent.

When the Allies entered Belgium at the beginning of September 1944, Vanderheyden and Kiel had already left for Germany, together with Kiel's daughter.[29] Their flight was better prepared than Kiel would later care to acknowledge. Günther Schwarz, who held a key position within the German propaganda ministry regarding German film exports, had travelled to France and Belgium in August 1944. In a report he presented in Berlin shortly afterwards, he mentioned that Vanderheyden was in danger because of his pro-German attitude and cooperation with the occupying forces. Precisely for that reason a number of the company's possessions were transported to Germany already in August. In September, Kiel and Vanderheyden even stayed at Schwarz's villa for some time. In late November 1944, Vanderheyden wrote a letter to the propaganda ministry.[30] At that time, Belgium had been liberated, but Flemish collaborators had established a Flemish government-in-exile in Berlin, which would await Germany's final victory and the opportunity to re-establish themselves in the homeland. In this letter, Vanderheyden stated his allegiance to this 'Flemish national government' (*Landesleitung Flandern*) and asked the propaganda ministry for advice regarding his further career. He suggested that perhaps he could screen his older films for Flemish workers, who were still in Germany, or finish his *Flanders* film project, or maybe transform his company into a German subsidiary (called *Jan Vanderheyden-Film-Ausweichstelle Berlin*). Unsurprisingly, all these possibilities were rejected by the Ministry of Propaganda. The existence of the letter (which is not mentioned in Kiel's memoirs) remained unknown in Belgium, and consequently the document did not appear as evidence during the later

trial against Vanderheyden. There is no doubt that if this had happened, the punishment imposed on him would have been even more severe.

Vanderheyden, Kiel, and Kiel's daughter were still in Berlin when the Red Army entered the city. During that time, they met acquaintances such as actor Heinz Rühmann and heard stories of violence and rape, but were not personally harmed. They eventually moved to the US Army-controlled sector of Berlin. Kiel found work there and old friends occasionally sent care packages. They were able to scrape out a living, but did not have many prospects. In 1947, Vanderheyden and Kiel learned from acquaintances that a trial against the Film Guild would be held before the War Council in Belgium, whereby Vanderheyden was to be indicted, along with two other persons who had occupied important offices, but who had not fled Belgium. Vanderheyden wanted to avoid a trial in absentia, so he returned to his homeland and presented himself to the court, whereupon he was immediately locked up to await trial.

Vanderheyden on Trial

Decades later, after Vanderheyden's death, some people sought to put his wartime activities into perspective. Film historian Paul Davay wrote in 1973 that Vanderheyden had been guilty of 'stupidity' rather than 'betrayal'.[31] Joz Van Liempt, from the 1950s onwards a leading figure in the Flemish film community, who had lashed out at Kiel and Vanderheyden repeatedly in the 1940s and 1950s, expressed himself more positively in a 1999 interview, stating that German film policy would have followed the exact same course even without Vanderheyden's cooperation and that Vanderheyden served as a scapegoat after the liberation.[32] Shortly after the liberation, however, when the wounds were still fresh, Vanderheyden was enemy number one in the Belgian film community. Film journals were furious that 'Vonderheyden'[33] and 'Frau Kiel' had escaped to Berlin and publicly demanded their arrest and prosecution. The trial came four years later.

At the beginning of May 1949, Vanderheyden and his co-accused appeared before the War Council. Several witnesses and financial experts testified at the trial. The verdict followed on 16 July 1949. Of the three defendants, Vanderheyden, who had occupied the most important position within the Film Guild, was also by far the most severely punished. He was sentenced to thirteen years of prison and a fine of 5 million Belgian francs. The co-accused were each sentenced to three years and 1 million

Belgian francs. After an appeal, Vanderheyden's sentence was reduced on 24 May 1950 to ten years' imprisonment and a fine of 3 million francs.

What was Vanderheyden really convicted for? How guilty was he? It is easier to ask such questions than to answer them. The judicial files against Vanderheyden and his co-defendants contain thousands of pages, including numerous wartime documents, transcripts of post-war testimonies, and reports written by legal and economic experts.[34] An analysis of these documents demonstrates without a doubt that Vanderheyden had no involvement in determining German film policy vis-à-vis Belgian film distributors and Belgian cinema owners. He was never the true leader of the Belgian film corporation and Guild, but merely the implementer of German orders. After the liberation, no one was inclined to admit that some of these German-enforced regulations had been much-needed and had solved problems the Belgian film sector had been struggling with for decades. The introduction of minimum entrance fees for cinemas and of standard rental contracts (with mutual rights for distributors and exhibitors) were highly needed. Vanderheyden's lawyer pointed this out during the trial and argued that some measures Vanderheyden was accused of introducing had been retained after the war, suggesting that these regulations were not so evil after all. The judge responded that this point was irrelevant: the fact that the measures had been written by the Germans made it a patriotic duty to oppose them.[35] This anecdote illustrates that the trial was not just about what Vanderheyden had done, but also about his attitude while doing it. Indeed, the thirty-six-page judgement from 1949 makes it clear that Vanderheyden was not just blamed for implementing German film policy, but particularly for doing it with such enthusiasm.[36] The verdict stated that even though Vanderheyden usually did not personally conceptualise the regulations, he issued them with too much gusto. An incriminating factor was the allegation that Vanderheyden had personally proposed to the PAB the elimination of the Belgian film control commission, thereby reserving the power of censorship exclusively for the PAB. A second incriminating factor was the point that he had cooperated without reservation in the removal of American film distributors from the Syndicate Chamber. The main criticism, however, remained that he had not only dutifully carried out the German orders, but that he did so with undisguised enthusiasm, repeatedly highlighting how good he thought these measures were.

Was Vanderheyden then just a scapegoat, an innocent victim of victor's justice? Certainly not (Fig. 4.8). He did not personally decide to expulse

Fig. 4.8 Poster for the Italian movie *Ridi pagliaccio* (*The Laughing Clown*, 1942). Jan Vanderheyden distributed the German-dubbed version *Vorbestraft* (*Previously Convicted*), but under a more romantic title: *Artistenliefde* (*Artists in Love*). (Roel Vande Winkel collection [KU Leuven])

Jews working in the film business and to ban American films, but he nevertheless presided over associations that supported the implementation of those policies and personally praised, in writing, the 'elimination of American film distribution […] and the Arianyzation of the Belgian movie business'.[37] It must also be stressed that Vanderheyden caused economic damage to people who were not only his compatriots, but also his competitors, for example, by having many smaller film distribution houses closed down. As mentioned above, Vanderheyden made full use of his powers to oversee the film projects others were working on and was not shy about giving his own projects a boost. There is no doubt that Vanderheyden profited financially, both as a film producer and as a film distributor, from decisions he implemented and from the know-how and contacts he developed through the office he occupied.

Nevertheless, without condoning or minimising Vanderheyden's deeds, it is striking that the imprisonment and fines imposed on him were much higher than that of a fellow defendant, who was also accused of political collaboration and had demonstrably betrayed several of his compatriots to the PAB when it turned out that they had broken the rules. It is not inconceivable that his personal relationship with Kiel contributed to the harsher punishment, because it was mentioned during the trial that Kiel had reported someone to the German authorities for having played the Belgian national anthem on the piano. However, as a German citizen without any official function in the Film Guild or its predecessors, Kiel herself was not put on trial.

Aftermath[38]

During the more than thirty years that Kiel survived Vanderheyden, the part of her life that she regretted the most, or rather what she considered the most unjust thing that had ever happened to her, was not Vanderheyden's conviction, but another post-war legal case. When Kiel and Vanderheyden had fled to Germany in August 1944, Vanderheyden's estranged wife (still living in Paris) got wind of it. She hurried to Belgium and had his assets confiscated. This included the production company Kiel had co-founded in 1943. The legal logic was as follows: Kiel's 'possessions' were not in fact hers, because they had been 'gifts' from Vanderheyden. As a married man, Vanderheyden had left his wife to live with his mistress and had subsequently illegally transferred funds from the matrimonial estate to Kiel. By

consequence, Vanderheyden's 'abandoned' wife was entitled to everything Vanderheyden and Kiel had left behind.

Neither Vanderheyden's wife nor the lawyer administrating Vanderheyden's assets was well acquainted with the film business. While Vanderheyden was still in Germany, they sold the entirety of the film stock they had found: short films, feature films, advertising films, and undeveloped film negatives. All of this was sold, including copyrights and exploitation rights, for 100,000 Belgian francs to some Belgian distributors. The new owners had struck a great deal and would make more than one million francs on re-releasing *Whitey* (1934) alone. For Kiel and Vanderheyden, the loss of their catalogue was a wound that would never heal. It was, however, unlike post-war statements by Kiel, not a punishment for Vanderheyden's wartime behaviour, but the result of ill-considered decisions made by a lawyer acting as the administrator of Vanderheyden's matrimonial estate.

Vanderheyden, unlike his two fellow convicts, would never be legally rehabilitated. He did not end up serving his full prison sentence and was released relatively early, in July 1951. He was a free man, but had lost his civil rights and was still charged with the unpaid fine of 3 million Belgian francs. Upon Vanderheyden's release, Kiel travelled back to Belgium and joined him. They had not made a film in years but in that time no one had stepped in to occupy the position they once held. There was no Belgian television (yet), so there was still a market for lowbrow Flemish film comedies. With the support of a few businessmen, the *Antwerpse Filmonderneming* (*Antwerp Film Company*, AFO) was founded. Legally and commercially, it was impossible for a convicted 'collaborator' to front the new film company, so Edith Kiel finally had the chance to come to the fore, as AFO's scriptwriter and director. Vanderheyden, now more or less reduced to the role of Kiel's accountant, found it hard to reconcile himself with his lost status. The couple experienced difficult times but stayed together until Vanderheyden's death in 1961. Edith Kiel completed the AFO film she was working on at that time—her sixteenth (!) post-war feature—but then retired. When she died in 1993, she could look back on a long, tumultuous, and productive career. The Second World War and the subsequent path she and Vanderheyden had chosen during the occupation marked a turning point. They had lost everything, but when they were able to start working again, Kiel could truly step out from the shadow of her partner and openly be recognised as the scriptwriter, director, and editor of her movies.

Notes

1. Vande Winkel, R. (2011 rev.) German influence on Belgian cinema, 1933–45: from low-profile presence to downright colonisation, p. 72–84 in R. Vande Winkel & D. Welch, *Cinema and the Swastika: The International Expansion of Third Reich Cinema*. Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave.
2. Biltereyst, D. (2007) The Roman Catholic Church and Film Exhibition in Belgium, 1926–1940, pp. 193–214 in *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 27 (2).
3. For this chapter, I have translated significant parts of the fifth chapter of my 2014 book with the late Dirk Van Engeland. Vande Winkel, R. & D. Van Engeland (2014) *Edith Kiel & Jan Vanderheyden: pioniers van de Vlaamse film*. Brussels: Cinematek. As mentioned on p. 205 of that book, I am the sole author of that specific chapter. This book was based on extensive archival research and on a unique source: the unpublished memoirs of Kiel, which are in private hands.
4. Vande Winkel & Van Engeland (2014), pp. 9–95. See also Biltereyst, D. & S. Van Bauwel (2004) De Witte—Whitey, pp. 49–58 in E. Matthijs (ed.), *The Cinema of the Low Countries*. London & New York: Wallflower Press.
5. Letterenhuis (Antwerpen), *De Witte* (press cuttings).
6. Kiel writes about this in her unpublished memoirs, and it was later confirmed by several people involved in the production process. See also: Van Engeland, D. (2005) *Voor altijd 'de Witte'. Jef Bruyninkx – Vlaams filmvedette en T.V.-pionier*. Duffel: Den Grooten Duffelaar.
7. Reviews of individual films are quoted in Vande Winkel & Van Engeland (2014), pp. 62–65 and 88–92.
8. Fowler, C. (2010) Cinema That Stays at Home: The Inexportable Films of Belgium's Gaston Schoukens, Edith Kiel and Jan Vanderheyden, pp. 256–271 in *Screen*, 51 (3). Nevertheless, Kiel and Vanderheyden exported several of their films to the Netherlands, see: Vande Winkel & Van Engeland (2014) pp. 55 and 74–75.
9. Vande Winkel (2011); Vande Winkel, R. (2017) Film Distribution in Occupied Belgium (1940–1944): German Film Politics and Its Implementation by the 'Corporate' Organisations and the Film Guild, pp.46–77 in *TMG Journal for Media History*, 20 (1).
10. Vande Winkel & Van Engeland (2014), pp. 100–104.
11. *La Cinégraphie Belge*, 16 March 1940.
12. Wildiers, C. (1940) Brief uit Antwerpen, p. 61 in *CINEMA*, 1 (1).
13. Ernest Claes Society, Ernest Claes diaries, entry from 16 August 1940. After the war, others would confirm that Kiel wore the party symbol. See: Anon. (1949b) Les 'Kollabos' du cinema, pp. 1–4 in *Cinéjournal*, 12 (346).
14. Belgian State Archives (Brussels), archives of the Aliens Police, file 1.641.636.

15. Letterenhuis (Antwerpen), documentation folders (containing hundreds of press clippings with reviews, interviews, press releases, etcetera) on Kiel, Vanderheyden and their films.
16. For example, Vanderheyden, J. (1940) Naar Nieuwere Tijden. De grondslagen van het hervormde Belgische cinemawezen, p. 5 in *CINEMA*, 1 (1); Vanderheyden, J. (1942) Handel en Nijverheid: het filmwezen in België, pp. 442–444 in *Economische Berichten*, 2 (15–16); Vanderheyden, J. (1943) Jaren van ommekeer, p. 1–2 in *CINEMA*, 3 (1).
17. Vanderheyden, J. (1941) De oprichting van de groepering der productie en de geest van kameraadschap, p. 1–2 in *CINEMA*, 1 (3).
18. CEGESOMA, 'Jahresbericht der Propaganda-Abteilung Belgien beim Militärbefehlshaber in Belgien und Nordfrankreich (August 1941)', p. 71.
19. Vande Winkel & Van Engeland (2014), pp. 105–113; Thys (M.) (ed.) (1999) *Belgian cinema*. Gent: Ludion—Belgian Royal Film Archive.
20. CEGESOMA, 'Jahresbericht…', p. 72.
21. Vande Winkel, R. & Van linthout,I (2008) 'Für den dämlichen Titel kann ich nichts': wenn die Sonne wieder scheint nach Stijn Streuvels' Roman der Flachsacker im Rahmen der nationalsozialistischen Flamenpolitik, pp. 60–72 in Filmblatt, 13 (36).
22. Benvindo, B. (2010) *Henri Storck, le cinéma belge et l'Occupation*. Bruxelles. Vande Winkel (2008) Vlaanderen te weer? Het verzwegen parcours van Flandria Film in de Tweede Wereldoorlog, pp. 210–235 in *Wetenschappelijke Tijdingen*, 67 (3).
23. Anon. (1949a) Les 'Kollabos' du cinema, pp. 1–4 in *Cinéjournal*, 12 (345).
24. Ernest Claes Society, Ernest Claes diaries, entry from 7 November 1941.
25. http://www.cinema-in-occupied-belgium.be
26. De Bruyn, J. (1942), in: *Volk en Staat*, 14 August.
27. De Bruyn (1942).
28. Post-war testimony of Léon Dassonville. See: Anon. (1949b).
29. The flight to Germany and their whereabouts there are described in Vande Winkel & Van Engeland (2014), pp. 116–123.
30. Bundesarchiv, R 109-I / 2566.
31. Davay, P. (1973) *Cinéma de Belgique*. Gembloux: Duculot, p. 72.
32. Vande Winkel & Van Engeland (2014), pp. 119.
33. The purposeful misspelling of Vanderheyden's name, 'Germanising' it by replacing 'van' with 'von', was intended to highlight his German sympathies and perhaps even evoke names of Nazi leaders such as von Ribbentrop and von Falkenhausen—to further paint Vanderheyden as a collaborator.
34. Belgian State Archives, *Gilde du Film*.
35. Anon. (1949a), p. 2.
36. Belgian State Archives, *Gilde du Film*.
37. Vanderheyden, J. (1942), p. 442.
38. Vande Winkel & Van Engeland (2014), pp. 124–127.

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CHAPTER 5

How to Mediate the Bohemian-Moravian Film Culture? Role of Sudeten German Historical Agents in the Protection of Local Culture During Occupation

Tereza Czesany Dvořáková and Volker Mohn

Czech Cinema and Cultural Autonomy Within the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia

In the period between the two world wars, the Czech film industry gradually became one of the most developed in Europe. Although the size of the market, the quality of films, and their export potential could not compare to countries such as France, Great Britain, or Germany, Czech film displayed admirable efficiency during the 1930s. The annual production

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P. Skopal, R. Vande Winkel (eds.), *Film Professionals in Nazi-Occupied Europe*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61634-2_5

of feature films in the second half of the 1930s ranged between thirty and fifty titles.[1] The Czech film industry in the 1930s focused primarily on local audiences, that is, primarily on Czechs and very little on Slovak[2] and German[3] audiences. Low-budget films, mostly comedies, prevailed. At that time, the Czech star system was intensively developed. Despite the persisting local character of Czech production, contacts with foreign countries also intensified during this period. Dozens of German-language and other versions of early sound Czech films were produced. (One commercially successful example is the German version of *K. und K. Feldmarschall* [Imperial and Royal Field Marshal], Karel Lamač, 1930; titled *C. a k. polní maršálek* in its Czech version). Czech studios hosted foreign film crews and—in a few cases—Czech films were shot as international projects with ambition of widespread exploitation abroad.[4]

The Czechoslovak political leadership, which perceived Czech film as merely commercial entertainment throughout the 1920s, began during the 1930s to understand its development as a national cultural value. After the onset of sound, protectionist measures to aid domestic production were established, and in the mid-1930s the state created a system of financial subsidies for domestic feature and documentary films.[5] This shift in policy was related to the fact that professional associations of the film industry (e.g. cinemas and producers' associations, the film workers' union) played an increasing role in the Czech film environment. They were successfully able to lobby with the relevant ministries—primarily the *Ministerstvo průmyslu, obchodu a živností* (Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Crafts)—for an improved status of Czech film. In addition to increasing the financial support of Czech films, their greater goal was to approve new film legislation and centralize the coordination of the film industry.[6] In 1933, a modern film studio complex in the Prague neighbourhood of Barrandov was opened. Its majority owner, film tycoon Miloš Havel, counted on the fact that it would also be used to make foreign films. However, international contacts were complicated by the foreign policy situation. In the second half of the 1930s, political tensions between democratic Czechoslovakia and Nazi Germany grew. This was manifested in Czech film, for example, by a wave of anti-war and left-wing films,[7] and also by the anti-Nazi focus of the Czech film newsreel *Aktualita*.[8]

Czechoslovakia had a total of 1850 cinemas before Nazi Germany occupied the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia, which had a majority German population, in September 1938.[9] Czech films gained great popularity among Czech-speaking audiences especially during the sound period starting in the 1930s. American and German films were also very successful on the

Czechoslovak market. Around thirty-six Czech films per year entered distribution in the Czechoslovak market between 1935 and 1938. American films dominated the cinemas in Czechoslovakia (128–171 films per year), followed by German films (78–82 titles per year, but only 46 films in 1938). Between twelve and twenty-two French, British, and Austrian films, per country, were imported annually.[10] Foreign films were mostly subtitled, but there was also the limited possibility of importing foreign films in German-language versions in the early sound era and later films with German dubbing.[11]

There were several plans to reorganize the film industry and create a central film chamber. This chamber was to be established and funded with the help of the state, and in the period of growing political pressure at the time, filmmakers perceived it as a chance to maintain the autonomy of the film industry. The emancipation process of the Czech film associations culminated precisely between the Munich Agreement in September 1938[12] and the beginning of the Nazi occupation in March 1939.[13] The good will of the Czech authorities to support and protect Czech film was apparent.[14] In the aftermath of the Munich crisis, censorship intensified and the wave of Czech and Slovak nationalism reached its peak. It led to attacks in the print media on foreigners and Jews in management positions of distribution companies and cinemas.[15] Last but not least, the Munich Agreement had strong economic consequences, because Czechoslovakia lost 30% of its cinemas when Germany seized its border areas.[16]

On 15 March 1939, the Czech part of Czechoslovakia was also occupied by the German army. Slovakia separated and created an independent Slovak state. A day later, in Prague, Adolf Hitler issued the 'Decree for the Establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia', which guaranteed autonomy for the new state, while at the same time establishing the Third Reich and its representative, the *Reichsprotektor* (Reich Protector) as entities with sovereign power over the Czech authorities.[17] Very quickly, the interests of the Third Reich began to have effects on the Czech film industry. The new German-controlled censorship office *Filmprüfstelle* (Film Control Office) monitored the content of all films. Immediately after the occupation, the Nuremberg Laws came into force and in course of the coming two years some unions, such as the huge gymnastics organization *Sokol*, were abolished. The Germans ""aryanized" many distribution companies (including the largest in the Protectorate *Elekta-Slavia*) and more than half of the domestic cinemas, a process aided by the "Aryanization" and dissolution of organizations like *Sokol*. "Aryanization" impacted the modern studios in Barrandov as well because one of their minority shareholders was identified as a Jew.[18] The confiscated assets of

the film companies were managed by the *Filmtreuhandstelle* (Film Trust Office) through the administration of so-called *Treuhänders*, trustees or 'keepers' who assumed extensive powers in the companies they were responsible for. The Film Control Office and the Film Trust Office were closely linked to the *Amt des Reichsprotektors* (Office of the Reich Protector).

By 1942, the Germans dominated most of the Czech film infrastructure: they had "aryanized" or forcibly bought out all four Czech film studios and unified them into the new *Prag-Film* company, which had become part of the Reich concern UFI in January 1942;[19] by this time they had also centralized film distribution and controlled the majority of cinema houses via loyal German administrators. Most Czech small film productions were closed down—in 1943 only two larger companies, *Lucernafilm* and *Nationalfilm*, were permitted to shoot and distribute their own feature films.[20] The Czech government of the Protectorate had very limited powers in the area of film, primarily overseeing financial support for Czech film production. Annual Czech production fell from forty-one in 1939 to nine in 1944,[21] although the budgets and quality of the individual films increased.[22]

The Department for Cultural Policy Affairs

On the German side, the *Abteilung für kulturpolitische Angelegenheiten* (Department for Cultural Policy Affairs) in the Office of the Reich Protector was charged with the control and direction of cultural life in the Protectorate.[23] In light of the formally granted cultural autonomy for the Czechs, this body's responsibility was officially limited to questions of German cultural life in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The goal was to create the impression that Czech cultural life will continue to be managed solely by Czech authorities. In reality, though, no such parallel administration existed at any time. If the department and other German authorities considered it necessary, they would intervene directly in Czech cultural life. The methods they employed were varied, ranging from prohibitions, confiscations, and arrests to financial incentives for cooperation.

Formally, the Department for Cultural Policy Affairs was subordinate to the Reich Protector, but at the same time it acted as a *Reichspropagandaamt* (Reich Propaganda Office, RPA), that is a branch of the *Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* (Reich Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, RMVP). In fact,

the Ministry repeatedly spoke out on cultural policy decisions in the Protectorate, for example on questions regarding the financial support of German culture or on personnel decisions. But Goebbels interfered directly in terms of content, too. This also applied to the film sector, which the Ministry considered particularly important for German propaganda.[24]

In October 1940, the Department for Cultural Policy Affairs comprised four groups. The first, according to the organizational plan, was led by Herbert Danzmann and was responsible for *general cultural tasks.* The second group was responsible for *Propaganda und Volkstum* (Propaganda and 'Nation'). It was headed by Anton Zankl, who is discussed in more detail below. At this time, the areas of film, literature, and music were only presented as sub-units of this group, which was to change several times in the following years. A fourteen-employee third group, responsible for the press, was led by *SS Obersturmführer* Wolfgang Wolfram von Wolmar. Finally, the fourth group, led by Lothar Scurla, dealt with broadcasting issues. At that time, the Department for Cultural Policy Affairs had a total of seventy-four employees, most of whom were merely assistants in the office or in the messenger service.[25]

With regard to the origins of its senior functionaries, the composition of the Department for Cultural Policy Affairs was mixed, as with other departments in the Office of the Reich Protector. Some senior positions were given to Germans from Bohemia and Moravia,[26] and others to Germans from Austria and Germany proper, representing a variety of personal backgrounds. Wolfgang Wolfram von Wolmar, a native of Vienna, was responsible for oversight and censorship of the press. He had lived in Bohemia for many years. After he was imprisoned by the Czechoslovak authorities as a student leader of the *Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund* (National Socialist German Student Union) in 1933 and expelled from Czechoslovakia, he continued his career in the Ministry of the Interior in Berlin and then returned to the Office of the Reich Protector in 1939.[27] In January 1940, Lothar Scurla, an employee of the German Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, was ordered to Prague to oversee and control the broadcasting sector.

The department was initially headed by two newcomers from Germany: *SS Hauptsturmführer* Karl Freiherr von Gregory from Hameln in western Germany was department head, and Hermann Glessgen, born in southwestern Germany in 1905 served as his representative. Within the department, Glessgen was also responsible for the film sector during the first two

years of the occupation. His superiors took great notice of him, not because of his film-political competence, however, but primarily because of his extravagant lifestyle. Already hopelessly in debt, he continued to live well beyond his means in Prague and also caused trouble for the German authorities through his relationship with the Czech actress Adina Mandlová. Even though at first Joseph Goebbels himself personally stood behind Glessgen and tried to restructure his finances, Glessgen provided false information about the amount of his debts and continued his escapades. He was finally relieved of his responsibilities in the spring of 1940.[28] The Prague literary scholar Peter Demetz mentions him as a 'prototype of the non-resident profiteer' in his memories.[29]

There seem to have been confrontations between German officials from Bohemia and Moravia and personnel from Germany within the office of the Reich Protector, yet this was only one of many lines of conflict. Contradictory perspectives and objectives were sometimes apparent in disputes between the Department for Cultural Policy Affairs and other German authorities. For example, right from the start, the department had to assert itself against the interests of other German authorities when it came to matters of financing and staffing. In addition to local officials and the Gestapo, individuals from the '*Altreich*' also pursued their own interests and tried to exert direct influence on German cultural policy in the Protectorate.

The personality of the individual department officials undoubtedly had a direct impact on their working methods and results. There were also major differences within the group of German officials who came from Bohemia and Moravia. Some of them allowed more latitude for Czech cultural life to develop, while more ambitious colleagues became notorious for their increasingly extensive and systematic interventions, such as August Ritter von Hoop, who was born in Prague and was responsible for monitoring the press and later also literature.[30]

There were also big differences among the individual cultural areas. Print media, radio, and film were of central importance for the Office of the Reich Protector for propaganda purposes. Accordingly, German intervention began in these areas much faster and was more extensive and radical. By contrast, other areas such as music were not a major focus for propaganda at all.

As the discussion above shows, there were varying and complex factors that influenced how the German officials operated and these occasionally led to conflicts among the occupation authorities. In addition to these

factors, however, it also mattered whether German officials had grown up in Bohemia and Moravia or whether they came from Germany or Austria. If someone came from Bohemia or Moravia, his approach was often quite different from his German-born colleagues for various reasons, whether due to their established social networks and knowledge of the Czech language, or sometimes (as in the case of August Ritter von Hoop[31]) because they came from mixed German-Czech families. As will be shown, the geographical-cultural background of individual officials often affected the nature of their interaction with Czech agencies and artists.

In the film sector, Anton Zankl and Wilhelm Söhnel, two German officials from Bohemia and Moravia, had central roles in shaping German film policy. But what role did they play, in fact? To what extent did they act as mediators for the goals of the German-occupying power? Did their origin in the Bohemian-Moravian realm influence the way in which they carried out their roles? The following two sections take a closer look at both individuals and attempt to answer these questions.

Executive Power and Territorial Interests: Anton Zankl

In April 1940, Anton Zankl succeeded Hermann Glessgen as deputy head of the Department for Cultural Policy Affairs.[32] In addition, he headed the Propaganda and 'Nation' unit within the Department, and according to the work breakdown plan, he was responsible for propaganda, cultural-political issues and research tasks, literature, music, and visual arts, as well as the film sector.[33]

Born in 1903 in Šenov (in the Egerland region of the so-called Sudetenland), he initially pursued a career in agriculture and completed an apprenticeship at the agricultural technical school in Tetschen-Liebwerd (Děčín-Libverda) in Northern Bohemia.[34] Zankl then moved to Velké Losiny (Ullensdorf) in North Moravia and taught at the agricultural school there. His personnel file at the SS *Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt* (Race and Settlement Main Office) stresses this agricultural background and emphasizes his years as a 'farmer's son'.[35]

At the same time, he was already politically active in the 1920s: In 1927 he was one of the founders of the *Karpatendeutsche Partei* (Carpathian German party, KdP). At first, this party saw itself more in the bourgeois camp and appeared to be loyal to the Czechoslovak state, but soon moved

Fig. 5.1 From left: Martin Wolf (head of the Department for Cultural Policy Affairs), Leopold Gutterer (State secretary at the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda), and Anton Zankl—at the Office of the Reich Protector. (**Česká** tisková kancelář/Czech News Agency)

politically to the right and from 1933 cooperated openly with the *Sudetendeutsche Heimatfront* (Sudeten German Home Front) and later with the *Sudetendeutsche Partei* (Sudeten German Party, SdP) of Konrad Henlein. According to his personnel file, Zankl was part of the KdP's executive staff from 1929 to 1931 and succeeded Franz Karmasin as person in charge of political agitation for the German section of the population.[36] According to the file, Zankl excelled in political agitation, particularly in the area of agricultural policy: it was noted, how he

educated the rural youth 'in the spirit of the SdP' in his numerous seminars with them.[37] It is unclear to what extent he came into direct contact with the leadership of the party during this time.

According to a post-war statement by the former head of the Prague section of the *Sicherheitsdienst der SS* (Security service of the SS, SD), Walter Jacobi,[38] there was a rumour among the employees of the Department for Cultural Policy Affairs that Zankl personally knew the German Secretary of State Karl Hermann Frank, one of the most senior officials of the occupation regime. Consequently, nobody dared to comment critically about Frank and his politics in the presence of Zankl. The alleged friendship with Frank combined with other influential social contacts from his KdP times may have contributed to his rapid rise.[39]

When Zankl started work at the Department for Cultural Policy Affairs, he had practically no previous experience in cultural policy. At first, he was entrusted with work that was connected to his professional background—the elimination of texts related to agricultural policy from the Czechoslovak administration.[40] But in the eyes of his superiors, he had a clear advantage that was ultimately decisive for his rapid career advance in the occupation regime: unlike most of his colleagues, he knew the Czech language. This enabled him to move around in Czech circles more easily and to examine original Czech texts without the need for a translation.

Zankl wrote several articles for the German propaganda magazine *Böhmen und Mähren* (Bohemia and Moravia). Some of these texts concerned the work of the Department for Cultural Policy Affairs, for example when he reported on the 'renaming of streets and squares in Greater Prague'.[41] On other occasions, his agricultural background came more clearly to the forefront, such as when he mused about the 'potato in Bohemia'.[42] In the later phase of the occupation, he also published several works with the *Volk und Reich* publishing house in Prague. Noteworthy here is the photo book *Prag im Lichtbild* (Prague in Photographs), published in 1944, for which Zankl wrote the foreword and captions. The pictures were taken by the renowned Czech photographer and director Karel Plicka.[43]

There had been multiple scandalous affairs in the film branch and rumours about the excessive lifestyle and risque escapades of those involved, including those surrounding Zankl's predecessor Hermann Glessgen. Zankl seems to have been keenly aware of this. Whenever he found himself in the spotlight, he and his superiors used every means to negate the impression of a disproportionately luxurious lifestyle. For

example, when criticisms from other departments arose regarding the celebrations on the occasion of Zankl's fortieth birthday in August 1943, which were accused of being inappropriately extravagant given the wartime conditions, Martin Wolf, the successor to Karl Freiherr von Gregory since 1942 and head of the Department for Cultural Policy Affairs, was forced to vehemently object that alcohol consumption was 'within extremely moderate limits'.[44] Wolf further stressed that representatives of film companies had been advised from the start 'that the gifts […] must not show the slightest appearance of any untidy connection'.[45]

Meanwhile, Zankl himself, on behalf of Karl Hermann Frank, wrote a report on the visit of *Reichsfilmintendant* Fritz Hippler to Prague in which he sharply denounced Hippler's 'alcoholic and other excesses *coram publico*'.[46] The Office of the Reich Protector was compelled to heavily criticize Hippler's excesses in Prague not least because they originated from a high-ranking German official and occurred directly in front of Czech filmmakers. At the same time, Zankl knew very well that he too was closely monitored on this issue.

In fact, Anton Zankl was not averse to extravagant celebrations. Indeed, as will be illustrated in the following, these were to a certain extent also part of his job. Archival sources and post-war statements indicate that he and other German officials were regular guests at parties in the villa of Czech actor and theatre owner Vlasta Burian. In the course of the post-war investigation, however, Burian defended himself stating that he never invited Zankl and other German officials on his own initiative.[47] Also Zankl and other German officials were apparently regular party guests in the villa of film producer Miloš Havel. Other regular guests at Havel's villa included not only famous Czech actresses such as Nataša Gollová, Adina Mandlová, and Hana Vítová, but also Third Reich film stars such as Hans Albers and Hans Moser when they were filming in Prague.[48]

The Nazi authorities made no effort in the film sector to prevent contacts between German and Czech artists. The aim, rather, was to monitor and steer these interactions wherever possible and to exploit these contacts for the purposes of the occupying power. That Zankl and other German officials took part in parties such as those described above corresponded to this purpose. But it was not just about monitoring the celebrations. When Zankl paid regular visits to the parties, it was often more than problematic for Miloš Havel, Vlasta Burian, and other hosts, who were overtly criticized by their compatriots for maintaining such close contact with a senior German official. This is, in fact, the matter of a frequently used instrument

of German cultural policy in the Protectorate, employed primarily on well-known and popular Czech artists who had previously been rather negative or at least reserved towards the occupying power. An alleged proximity to the regime was staged through 'invitations' to trips, the giving of awards, or writeups in press articles. The German cultural leaderships accepted that the artists' reputation would thus be compromised in the eyes of most of their compatriots was at least accepted—and indeed in some cases they even deliberately counted on this.[49]

In the spring of 1943, the regime even created the opportunity for meetings between Germans and Czechs in the pleasant atmosphere of a *Filmklub* (Film Club) on the premises of Prague's Lucerna Palace located in Wassergasse (Vodičkova Street). The traditional glamour and magic of the film world were apparently preserved and maintained at these gatherings. Subsequently, Karl Hermann Frank and his associates initiated these Film Club meetings to create an environment where surveillance was easier than in private rooms.[50]

Anton Zankl was directly involved in the founding of the Film Club and the accompanying propaganda.[51] During an unannounced visit by Frank to a Film Club meeting on 24 June 1943, for example, Zankl assumed the task of preparing a written report on the evening's activities, for which he also actively asked the Czech actors present about their impressions. Frank's visit was 'a big surprise', Zankl reports, and includes quotes from several actors, such as Jaroslav Marvan: 'When I saw the Secretary of State sitting there, it looked like he was one of us.'[52] The name of Zdeněk Štěpánek also appears in Zankl's report, whereby the actor is quoted as saying to Zankl: 'A very nice evening, nothing official, nobody forced you to do anything'.[53] There is considerable doubt that the statements in Zankl's report reflect the real opinions of the Czech actors. Nevertheless, at the time it quickly became a problem for the Czech actors interviewed. The text was not only intended as a way for Zankl to flaunt his success, in the form of his Film Club, vis-à-vis other German institutions, but was also aimed at publication in the print media. Again, the German authorities, like Zankl here, often pursued the goal of moving Czech actors, who had previously remained at a distance from the occupational regime, into its sphere of influence. Of course, the actors themselves had absolutely no interest in having these quotes attributed to them in the subsequent press reports.

Prior to the Film Club event, Zdeněk Štěpánek had already had an uncomfortable experience with Zankl. In his memoir Štěpánek recalls an

event from the first months of the occupation, whereby he was brought to the Office of the Reich Protector. He was received by an 'elegantly dressed man'—Anton Zankl—who showed Štěpánek a whole stack of critical reports against him and questioned him for a long time, before administering a clear warning to him about his behaviour.[54]

There are also other situations in which Anton Zankl put pressure on people from the Czech cultural scene to assert German interests. As the German occupiers were gradually taking over the *Aktualita* company, which was responsible for the production of Czech weekly newsreels, it was Zankl who put its owner Karel Pečený under multiple forms of pressure.[55] Generally, it is not possible to clearly define the extent to which Zankl intervened directly in film productions on behalf of the occupying power. One of the best-known examples of his intervention was on the film *Jan Cimbura*, directed by František Čáp in 1941 and based on a novel by Jindřich Š. Baar. In contrast to the book, the film contains several strongly anti-Semitic scenes. In a recorded interrogation from May 1946, Čáp claims that full responsibility for the addition of these scenes lies with Anton Zankl, who compelled the film company *Lucernafilm* and him as the director to integrate these problematic passages into the film.[56] The extent to which this is true, however, cannot be confirmed.

When German occupation policy in the Protectorate is described in historical studies, it is often spoken of as applying a 'carrot and stick' approach. This dual approach is clearly evident with Anton Zankl. On the one hand, he regularly relied on subpoenas of critical Czech filmmakers, threats and prohibitions, and the implementation of ideological guidelines to maintain control over film operations. On the other hand, he maintained amicable social contacts with Czechs at official celebrations and private parties. The direct link between Zankl and Czech filmmakers was of great value to his superiors and was an important part of his job. The Film Club, with Zankl as its central instigator, even created an institutional framework for this very purpose. Zankl's local connections thanks to his political activities in the interwar period and his fluent knowledge of the Czech language were extremely useful in helping him achieve these goals.

Despite his advantageous situation, though, Zankl repeatedly received criticism from his superiors. His work was not burdened by personal escapades, as had been the case with his predecessor Glessgen, but other problems slowed his career down. For example, he tried on multiple occasions to be accepted into the SS, but had been rejected each time as 'racially unsuitable'. It was only after Karl Hermann Frank personally intervened

on his behalf with Heinrich Himmler in the summer of 1942 that Zankl was finally accepted, being directly assigned to the rank of *SS Obersturmführer*. However, it appears that Zankl was in no hurry to submit his personal documents to the SS. The fact that these documents were still missing in the summer of 1944 caused some trouble for Zankl, including an admonishment from Frank himself.[57]

Zankl also received criticism from the SD, whose agents were suspicious of what they saw as his overly friendly relationship with the Czech Minister of Agriculture, Adolf Hrubý. They alleged that the two would talk too openly about political issues: 'Hrubý believes Zankl unconditionally and Z. is one of his best […] confidants. Hrubý can say everything to Zankl and the problems can be rolled out and dealt with openly.'[58] Since Zankl came from the same region as Hrubý, he is 'much closer and more open to the Czech element, realizes and understands it better and always tries to have a balancing effect'.[59] The problem was that Zankl did not maintain the proper distance between himself and Czechs as demanded by German officials. The SD was unwilling to accept such a close relationship of trust between a Czech minister and a department head in the office of the Reich Protector, especially in this way and on such equal footing. The SD's criticism is helpful for creating a more comprehensive assessment of Zankl, since their report provides an indication of how Zankl acted outside of the realm of film and culture—in this case, in the area of agriculture, from which he originally came.

In early May 1945, Anton Zankl left Prague for Pilsen (Plzeň), which was already under US control at the time. Consequently, he was beyond the reach of Czechoslovak security authorities in the immediate post-war period.[60] At some point, Zankl then moved to Germany where he remained. There is almost no information about his post-war life, but he can be traced again in Neustadt an der Weinstraße in Hesse, West Germany, where he was registered from 1958 and worked in the local cultural office for land development and land management.[61]

Adaptability and Building of Social Networks: Wilhelm Söhnel

Sudeten German Wilhelm Söhnel, the other high-ranking film official of concern in this chapter, was even closer to the Czech environment than Zankl. Söhnel was born on 25 November 1909 in the northern Moravian industrial region into a German-speaking family of a railway official.[62] Like

Fig. 5.2 W. Söhnel—passport photo. (Archiv bezpečnostních složek/Security Services Archive, f. Mapy zpráv zpracované Studijním ústavem MV (fond Z), sign. Z-10-1002-2)

Zankl, Söhnel also spoke Czech very well, due to the fact that he grew up in a majority Czech-speaking community. He completed his law studies at the German University in Prague[63] in 1933 and passed his doctoral examination two years later. [64] During the last years of his studies, Söhnel also worked as a junior trainee and attorney-at-law in the Moravian city of Ostrava. He achieved the rank of officer-aspirant while completing his compulsory military service in the Czechoslovak army in the years 1937–38.[65] However, at the turn of 1938–39, Wilhelm Söhnel, now with the title of JUDr. (Doctor of Law), was unexpectedly not admitted to the bar exam due to disputes over his citizenship after the annexation of his native region by Poland in October 1938. It appears that Söhnel was then unemployed for several months.[66]

This development may have been what led to a change in the previously neutral political attitude of the young lawyer, resulting in his inclination towards pro-German and Nazi politics. According to post-war documents of the Czechoslovak secret police, Wilhelm Söhnel may have entered the Carpathian German Party before the occupation in January 1939, during a visit to Slovakia.[67] We know for sure that a few days after the occupation, on 1 April 1939, he became a member of the *Nationalsozialistische Arbeiterpartei* (Nazi party, NSDAP), and on 2 April 1939, his request for German citizenship was approved.[68] Somewhere during that time he also passed the German bar exam. It is also possible, however, that the move towards the Nazis was not just a result of a shift in political beliefs or disappointment with the obstacles that the Czechoslovak Republic put in his way. It could have also been a conscious decision motivated by the

prospect of career advancement. Indeed, Söhnel did not behave at all like a fanatical Nazi supporter according to any personal recollections or archival documents. On the contrary, he was characterized by a factual and non-ideological approach to his work tasks (or rather, as non-ideological as could be given that these tasks were in the service of a totalitarian regime). Without a doubt, Söhnel's NSDAP membership combined with his bar exam paved the way for rapid career advancement.

We do not exactly know how Wilhelm Söhnel came to Prague and started working in the field of film policy. In an interview from the 1960s, he claimed that he was approached directly by then director of film affairs at the Office of the Reich Protector, Hermann Glessgen, who was looking for a German lawyer in Prague interested in films.[69] Already in the summer of 1939, Söhnel began attending meetings with Czech film industry associations[70] as a legal consultant for the Department for Cultural Policy Affairs. He very quickly began to be entrusted with other tasks, including work with the Film Control Office and the Film Trust Office.[71] Söhnel prepared the accounting and property liquidations of more than a dozen companies for the rapidly growing film office.[72] He also liquidated cinemas owned by abolished organizations such as *Sokol*. In addition, Söhnel was directly named as *Treuhänder* of some formerly Jewish-owned companies: *Moldavia*, *Koruna-film*, *Arthur Heller*, *Beda Heller*, *Continental*, and others.[73] Of course, he conveniently concealed this fact in his post-war *curricula vitae* and his memoirs for obvious reasons.

Already at that time, it became characteristic of Söhnel to be able to maintain a certain degree of independence despite his culturally and politically exposed position. In his work with the German authorities, he was primarily, perhaps even exclusively, an external employee, who gradually built up exclusive know-how and established many good contacts within the Protectorate administration, as well as at the Berlin Film Headquarters and among Czech filmmakers.

Intermezzo: Bohemian-Moravian Film Chamber

The creation of a film chamber—the supreme body for the cinema industry in the Protectorate—is an important moment for understanding the specific position and goals of Sudeten German mediators of cultural policy such as Zankl and Söhnel.[74] At the beginning of the occupation, the German side (primarily Herrman Glessgen and the Berlin headquarters) planned that there would only be an affiliated subject of the

Reichsfilmkammer (Reich Film Chamber, RKF) active in the Protectorate.[75] At the same time, there were strong, ongoing lobbying efforts by Czech film circles for the establishment of an independent Czech film chamber, which would ensure the autonomy of Czech-speaking filmmaking. However, Zankl's Department for Cultural Policy Affairs at the Office of the Reich Protector, in cooperation with its consultant Wilhelm Söhnel, decided otherwise: on 26 October 1940, the Reich Protector in Bohemia and Moravia established the *Česko-moravské filmové ústředí/Böhmisch-mährische Filmzentrale* (Bohemian-Moravian Film Union).[76]

The new organization was granted extensive powers over the entire realm of cinema in the territory of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and membership in it was compulsory for all people and companies working in the film branch. What is important, however, is that the institution was not based primarily on a national principle, but on a territorial one. National parity was declared within the organization's statutes—both German and Czech were official languages and both Germans and Czechs were represented in the higher functions.[77] In his post-war testimony, Wilhelm Söhnel explained the motivations for this in the following way:

> At that time, we were already working on what kind of organization we would create. It had to be done on a *utraquistic* basis. It was the Bohemian-Moravian Film Union. But the terms *Bohemian* and *Bohemian-Moravian* were not considered national, but territorial. That was important. In the decree establishing the Protectorate, the so-called autonomy did not apply only to Bohemia.[78]

This quotation significantly challenges the perspective of thinking about Protectorate film politics as simply a matter of binary negotiation between the German (ruling) and Czech (conquered) parties. As we see, other historical agents—namely, Sudeten German officials Anton Zankl and Wilhelm Söhnel—represented a third interest on the scene. They did not want to fully subordinate Czech territory to Reich needs, nor did they fight for the autonomy of (only) Czech culture. Unobtrusively and within the limits of their opportunities, they promoted the preservation of the cultural specificity of the Bohemian-Moravian space, the unique Czech-German culture that had existed and developed over centuries.

This third attitude was of great benefit to Czech film—although it proved to be unrealistic in course of the years, since Sudeten German

cultural policy had no chance of becoming more involved in the Protectorate administration. This is well illustrated by the example of the Bohemian-Moravian Film Union. Wilhelm Söhnel became the head of *Verbindungsstelle des Reichsprotektors in Böhmen und Mähren bei der Böhmisch-Mährischen Filmzentrale* (Reichsprotector's Joint Office in the Bohemian-Moravian Film Union). The Joint Office stood above the Bohemian-Moravian Film Union leadership and was entitled to any direct contact with German and foreign entities. Wilhelm Söhnel was provided with all the relevant documents of the Union for his consideration. The lawyer soon gained confidence in the Czech management of the Union, which included people such as Emil Sirotek.[79] In the coming years, the Union became an instrument of the occupation authorities' executive power over Czech film. But at the same time, it played an important role as a centre for the creation of national cinema: it supported the development of film projects, administered subsidies, educated filmmakers, coordinated the modernization of cinema houses, established a film archive and library, and so on.[80]

A good example of Wilhelm Söhnel's pro-Bohemian-and-Moravian attitude was the manoeuvre to bring of 60% of Protectorate cinema houses under the Union's control. In November 1942, the Film Trust Office was liquidated by the Bohemian-Moravian Film Union and the management of the seized cinemas was transferred directly to Söhnel. At that time, cinemas were routinely handed over to predominantly German administrators with an eye towards their future privatization.[81] In 1943, however, an inconspicuous administrative act by Wilhelm Söhnel, in cooperation with *Union* managers, established a new *Českomoravská kinematografická společnost* (*Böhmische-Mährische Lichtspieltheatergesellschaft*, also commonly known by the shorter name *Kinogesellschaft*; Bohemian-Moravian Cinema Society) under the control of the Bohemian-Moravian Film Union, whose task was to manage cinemas for the Union. In actuality, though, the possibility of the cinemas being privatized in the hands of Reich citizens was prevented and the cinemas remained under the control of the majority Czech *Union* and Söhnel's Joint Office.[82]

Wilhelm Söhnel has remained in the consciousness of the broader Czech public mainly due to his love affairs with Czech actresses. From 1941 to 1942, his lover was the above-mentioned Czech film star Adina Mandlová. Then, in 1942 he started becoming intimate with another famous actress, Nataša Gollová, who came from the intellectual family of an important Czech politician and was a close friend of Mandlová's.

According to witnesses this was a deep, long-lasting relationship over several years.[83] Unlike other Nazi bosses, Söhnel did not live in an aryanized Prague villa, but in an ordinary apartment in the city centre.[84] He became a close friend not only of Emil Sirotek, but also of Miloš Havel.[85] It is said that he helped many Czech filmmakers during the Protectorate. It was testified, for example, that he managed to abolish the forced administration of the Havel Brothers' culture palace *Lucerna*,[86] although Söhnel himself refuted this in one of his post-war statements.[87] It was also alleged that actress Helena Bušová was able to continue working in Czech film and theatre, despite her Jewish background[88] thanks to Söhnel's intervention.[89]

Söhnel's and Zankl's tolerance or even support for the development of Czech film culture increased significantly during the impending end of the war. Söhnel must have suspected that Czechs within the Czech-Moravian Film Union were actively planning and preparing for the post-war nationalization of Czechoslovak film. Both men tolerated the false employment of dozens of Czech writers in the production companies *Lucernafilm* and *Nationalfilm*, thereby protecting them from forced labour in the Reich.[90] In the last year of the war, the overpriced and artificially prolonged shooting of some films, whose premieres were obviously planned for the post-liberation period, occurred with the tacit approval of both men.

The post-war fate of Wilhelm Söhnel is so dramatic that it could warrant a separate chapter. Söhnel was arrested in May 1945 as a collaborator with the occupation administration and was investigated for seventeen months, but his guilt was never proven. On the contrary, many witnesses testified in his favour. After his release, he remained in Czechoslovakia despite the confiscation of his property. He gradually worked his way up to a position as advisor to the *Ministerstvo informací* (Ministry of Information) and he acquired Czech citizenship in February 1948, just before the communist putsch. The communist regime, however, was not interested in his services and the lawyer began to be persecuted once again. Therefore, he illegally fled Czechoslovakia in August 1948.[91]

In the subsequent years he worked as an attorney in Munich, until July 1950, when he was kidnapped and taken back to Czechoslovakia, where he was investigated for suspected assassination attempts on members of the government. The absurd accusation was only refuted after many months and Wilhelm Söhnel was not sent back to West Germany until May 1953.[92] Surprisingly, this dramatic episode did not have lingering negative effects on the lawyer's career, though. Within a few

months—thanks to the intervention of former exponents of Reich film policy, including Max Winkler[93]—he acquired a lucrative position as a legal and business expert in the German film industry. Söhnel worked as a specialist in the clarification of rights and trade regulations for films made during the Nazi era for the companies *Ufi*, *Ufa*, and *Transit-Film*.[94] Apparently, he fulfilled these duties very well—he was once again able to assert his adaptable and social nature, while also managing to remain objective and professional in the performance of his work.

Conclusion

The closer examination of the motives, deeds, and constellations connected to Anton Zankl and Wilhelm Söhnel offers compelling illustrations to supplement our understanding of Czech filmmakers' struggle against the Nazi will, as realized through the apparatus of the Office of the Reich Protector and its collaborators. Both personalities cannot be conceived as anything other than highly ambivalent in character. They both defended the interests of the Reich and its cultural policy, while at the same time both actively limiting its influence. Both of them were career Nazis, and both had no qualms participating in activities that from today's perspective are difficult to describe otherwise than as unethical.

Anton Zankl's degree of identification with the regime was likely deeper than that of the more independent legal expert Wilhelm Söhnel. Both of them shared a strong connection to the Bohemian-Moravian cultural space, which they both defended and protected within their limits. As members of the Sudeten German community, they perceived this space as essentially Czech-German in nature. Quite naturally, they were familiar with both language environments, and they both maintained direct and collegial friendly relationships with specific representatives of Czech cultural life.

Anton Zankl and Wilhelm Söhnel became real mediators and negotiators between Reich and Czech interests within the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Both individuals—with greater or lesser degrees of self-awareness—made significant contributions to the protection of the limited autonomy of Czech culture and the Czech film industry under German domination. In some cases, their efforts directly led to a limited, but notable development of Czech national culture despite the Nazi occupation.

Notes

1. Havelka, J. (1967) *Kronika našeho filmu 1898–1965*. Praha: Filmový ústav, p. 48.
2. The situation in Slovakia, which entered the new Czechoslovak Republic lacking infrastructure in the field of film industry, was significantly different. The basic problems were an insufficient cinema network in the territory and the relatively low commercial potential of the territory. The differing development dynamics in both areas became even more pronounced after the onset of sound. While in the silent era dozens of Slovak (mostly short documentary) films were created, after the advent of sound, the ambition for production disappeared for many years and then it was only occasionally that funds for the rare documentary film production could be raised. We cannot speak of systematic Slovak film production before the establishment of the Slovak State in 1939 and Slovakia did not start to produce feature films until after the Second World War. See more: Macek V. & Paštéková, J. (1997). *Dejiny slovenskej kinematografie*. Martin: Osveta, pp. 31–70.
3. The film industry of the German minority in Czechoslovakia in the 1930s has not yet been sufficiently described by scholarship. We know that there were specialized production companies in the Sudetenland that focused on Czech/German-language versions of early sound films. Some of them produced their German versions even until 1938. In general, however, the minority German-speaking population of three million did not have sufficient commercial potential to produce their own films. And the chance to distribute German-speaking films from Czechoslovakia to the Reich decreased during the 1930s for political reasons. The repertoire of cinemas oriented towards German audiences in large Czechoslovak cities and in the borderland consisted primarily of films of German and Austrian origin. For more on this topic see, Klimeš, I. (2007) A Dangerous neighbourhood: German Cinema in Czechoslovak Region, 1933–1945 pp. 112–129 in Vande Winkel, R. & Welch D. (eds.) *Cinema and the Swastika. The International Expansion of Third Reich Cinema*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
4. The best-known example is *Extase* (*Ecstasy*, 1933) by Gustav Machatý. We should also mention other famous Czech filmmakers who built a parallel career abroad, such as Anny Ondráková, Lída Baarová, and Karel Anton in Germany.
5. Szczepanik, P. (2011) Hollywood in Disguise: Practices of Exhibition and Reception of Foreign Films in Czechoslovakia in the 1930s, pp. 166–185 in Biltereyst D. & Maltby R. & Meers P. (eds.) *Cinema, Audiences and Modernity*, London & New York: Routledge.

6. For more on this topic see: Czesany Dvořáková, T. (2011). *Idea filmové komory. Českomoravské filmové ústředí a kontinuita centralizačních tendencí ve filmovém oboru 30. a 40. let*. Praha: Charles University 2011 [PhD thesis].
7. Significant examples include: *Svět patří nám* (*The World belongs to Us*, 1937) or *Bílá nemoc* (*The White Disease*, 1937). Czech filmmakers also participated in the American anti-Nazi documentary *Crisis* (dir. Herbert Kline & Hans Burger, 1939).
8. Cf: Margry K. (2004) Newsreels in Nazi-Occupied Czechoslovakia: Karel Peceny and his newsreel company Aktualita, p. 70 in *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 24 (1). [https://doi.org/10.1080/0143968032000184506].
9. More than 90% of these 1850 cinemas were located in the Czech part of Czechoslovakia, and only about 153 in the Slovak part. Havelka, J. (1967), p. 102.
10. Havelka, J. (1967), p. 78.
11. Szczepanik, P. (2011), pp. 166–185; Klimeš, I. (2016) *Kinematografie a stát v českých zemích 1895–1945*. Praha: Univerzita Karlova, pp. 196–233.
12. In the second half of the 1930s, a significant part of the German population in the border area of the so-called Sudetenland became politically radicalized and began to openly sympathize with Nazi Germany due to the poor economic situation and neglect with regard to certain fundamental needs on the part of the Czechoslovak government. The Third Reich officially claimed these territories. The imminent war of conflict was temporarily resolved by the European powers of Great Britain, France, and Italy when they signed the Munich Agreement with the Third Reich. In accordance with this document, the Sudeten regions were handed over to the Reich. Czechoslovakia was not invited to these negotiations. The situation was also exploited by Poland, which took possession of part of the Silesia border region of Czechoslovakia. A new rump state was formed with the territories that remained, which was called the Second Czechoslovak Republic.
13. The Reich's demands to Czechoslovakia, coordinated with provocations by the radicalized portion of the German minority, continued after the Munich Agreement, and culminated in the German occupation of Czechoslovakia in mid-March 1939. In accordance with a decision by the Czechoslovak government, the German incursion was not countered with a military response. Adolf Hitler declared the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in the Czech part of Czechoslovakia. The Slovak territory became independent, forming a new Slovak state, which was a satellite of the Third Reich.

14. Czesany Dvořáková, T. (2011), pp. 59–92.
15. Bednařík, P. (2003), pp. 9–20.
16. Havelka, J. (1967), p. 48.
17. Erlaß des Führers und Reichkanzlers über das Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren vom 16. März 1939. / Výnos Vůdce a říšského kancléře ze dne 16. března 1939 o Protektorátu Čechy a Morava (Decree of the Führer and Reich Chancellor on the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia of 16 March 1939). Sbírka zákonů a nařízení částka 28 from 17 March 1939. [http://ftp.aspi.cz/opispdf/1939/028-1939.pdf] (22. 2. 2020).
18. Because of the "Aryanization" of Barrandov, the Aryanization Law, which was sometimes referred to as the 'Lex Barrandov', was retroactivated a few days before. See, Bednařík, P. (2003). *Arizace české kinematografie*. Praha: Karolinum, p. 41. For more details on Barrandov, see also the chapter on the studios founder Miloš Havel in this volume.
19. Welch D. & Vande Winkel, R. (2011) Europe's New Hollywood? The German Film Industry Under Nazi Rule, 1933–1945, pp. 6–24 in Vande Winkel, R. & Welch D. *Cinema and the Swastika. The International Expansion of Third Reich Cinema*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
20. The Czech newsreel company *Aktualita* also continued operating in the Protectorate, adapting its news reporting to the needs of the occupiers. There were also several smaller producers of short films and distribution companies under the control of the Germans, who distributed foreign and older film titles. Cf: Margry, K. (2004), pp. 69–117.
21. Havelka J. (1946) *Filmové hospodářství v českých zemích a na Slovensku 1939 až 1945*. Praha: Československé filmové nakladatelství, p. 27.
22. Czesany Dvořáková T. & Doležalová A. & Moravcová H. (2020) Historie československého / českého filmu v zrdcadle jeho ekonomických dat, pp. 5–39 in *Iluminace* 32 (1).
23. When it was first created, this entity was called a Unit: *Gruppe für kulturpolitische Angelegenheiten*, but was renamed a Department (*Abteilung*) shortly after. For the purposes of this essay, the Department designation is used throughout.
24. Mohn, V. (2014) *NS-Kulturpolitik im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren. Konzepte, Praktiken, Reaktionen*. Essen: Klartext, pp. 82–90.
25. Organizational plan of the Department for Cultural Policy Affairs from 15 October 1940. Národní archiv Praha (hereafter NA), ÚŘP / 1134. The structure and staffing of the Unit (and later, Department) for Cultural Policy Affairs changed several times during the occupation—but this will not be discussed in more detail here.
26. As in the rest of the text, this place name does not mean the area of the *Protectorate*, but the geographic area of Bohemia and Moravia in the former Czechoslovakia, which also includes the so-called Sudetenland.

27. Fauth, T. (2004) *Deutsche Kulturpolitik im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren 1939 bis 1941*. Göttingen: V&R unipress, pp. 34–36.
28. Bednařík, P. (2003), pp. 79–83; Fauth, T. (2004), pp. 17–18.
29. Demetz, P. (2008) *Mein Prag. Erinnerungen 1939 bis 1945*. Wien: Zsolnay, pp. 316–317.
30. Mohn, V. (2014), pp. 124–125.
31. Hoop was born in Prague in 1899 to a Czech father and a German mother. Mohn, V. (2014), p. 124.
32. Fauth, T. (2004), p. 18.
33. Organizational plan from 15 October 1940. NA, ÚŘP/ 1134. See also Fauth, T. (2004), pp. 18–19.
34. Bednařík, P. (2003), pp. 84–86.
35. Anton Zankl's file at the *Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS*. Bundesarchiv (hereafter BArch), RS G 5441, pp. 58–671, 1536–1564, here 46.
36. Franz Karmasin, who became *Volksgruppenführer* under Jozef Tiso in Slovakia in 1938, was a former student of the agricultural technical school in Tetschen, from which Zankl also graduated. Weger, T. (2008): *"Volkstumskampf" ohne Ende? Sudetendeutsche Organisationen, 1945–1955*. Frankfurt am Main: Lang, p. 605.
37. Anton Zankl's file at the *Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS*. BArch, RS G 5441, pp. 58–671, 1536–1564, here p. 46.
38. From September 1942, Walter Jacobi (1909–1947) was the successor to Horst Böhme, head of the Prague section of the *SS Sicherheitsdienst* (SD).
39. Bednařík, P. (2003), pp. 84–86.
40. Anton Zankl's personal file at the *Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS*. BArch, RS G 5441, pp. 1536–1537.
41. *Böhmen und Mähren*, Ausgabe Juli 1940.
42. Die Kartoffel in Böhmen. In: *Böhmen und Mähren* (May 1940), p. 31.
43. Plicka had previously made two tendentious *cultural films* on behalf of the German authorities, which were routinely screened in cinemas together with wartime newsreels before the feature film. Dvořáková, T. (2006) Prager Barock—Barokní Praha. Karel Plickas Kulturfilm der 1940er Jahre als Grenzfall der Sprachenversionen, pp. 103–106 in Distelmeyer, J. (ed.) *Babylon in Film-Europa. Mehrsprachen-Versionen der 1930er Jahre*. München: edition text+kritik.
44. Note from Martin Wolf dated 5 August 1943, sent as a copy to the personal secretary of Karl Hermann Frank Robert Gies and to Walter Jacobi as the head of the Prague section of the *SS Sicherheitsdienst*. NA, 109-4-662.
45. Ibid.

46. The report compiled by Zankl on Fritz Hippler's behaviour during his visit to Prague on 12 February 1943, together with a statement by Karl Hermann Frank, was sent to Goebbels and became instrumental in Hippler's eventual dismissal. NA, 109-4-1489.
47. Kašpar, L. (2007) Český hraný film a filmaři za protektorátu. Propaganda, kolaborace, rezistence. Praha: Libri pp. 170–172, 182; Just, V. (1990) Věc Vlasta Burian. Rehabilitace krále komiků. Praha: Rozmluvy, pp. 108–109.
48. Schlegel, A.-J. (2008) Filmen zu Zeiten der Okkupation. Miloš Havel, Otokar Vavra und G. W. Pabst im Prag der Protektorats-Zeit, pp. 102–110 in Bock, H.-M. & Distelmeyer, J. & Roschlau, J. (eds) *Zwischen Barrandov und Babelsberg. Deutsch-Tschechische Filmbeziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert*. München: Boorberg.
49. Mohn, V. (2014), pp. 96–103, 468.
50. Mohn, V. (2014), pp. 430–431.
51. Kašpar, L. (2007), p. 159.
52. Report by Anton Zankl from 26 June 1943. NA, 109-4-1491, pp. 18–19.
53. Ibid.
54. Štěpánek, Z. (1961): *Herec. Vzpomínky národního umělce Zdeňka Štěpánka*. Praha: Mladá Fronta, pp. 232–233.
55. Margry, K. (2004), pp. 69–117.
56. Krejčová, H. (1993) Jsem, nevinen. Süss, Harlan, Čáp a jiní, pp. 65–97 in *Iluminace* 5 (3), pp. 88–89.
57. Bednařík, P. (2003), p. 84. See also the correspondence between the departments involved in this process. NA, 109-4-662.
58. Adolf Hrubý (1893–1951), 1942–1945 Minister of Agriculture of the Autonomous Government. SD report to Karl Hermann Frank dated 30 October 1944. NA, 110-5-43, pp. 73–74.
59. SD report to Karl Hermann Frank dated 30 October 1944. NA, 110-5-43, pp. 73–74.
60. Bednařík, P. (2003), pp. 84–86.
61. According to the registration documents, Zankl had been living in Neustadt since 5 March 1958. We would like to thank the team from the Neustadt an der Weinstraße City Archives for this information.
62. Census sheet for housing management: Josef Söhnel (1921). Státní okresní archiv (hereafter SOkA) Karviná, Okresní úřad Fryštát, N/ 39.
63. The *Deutsche Universität Prag* (German University in Prague) was established in 1882 when the Charles-Ferdinand University was split into German and Czech parts. After the German occupation in 1939, it became a Reich university with the official name *Deutsche Karls-Universität* (German Charles University). The university was closed in 1945 following the liberation of Czechoslovakia. Among others, Franz Kafka, Max Brod,

and Rainer Maria Rilke graduated from the University. For more information see: Pešek, J. & Míšková, A. & Hlaváčková, L. (1997). Německá univerzita v Praze 1882–1918, pp. 305–330 in: Havránek, J. *Dějiny Univerzity Karlovy III. 1802–1918*. Praha: Univerzita Karlova; Pešek, J. & Míšková, A. et al. (1998). Německá univerzita v Praze 1918–1939, pp. 181–211 in Havránek, J. & Pousta, Z. (eds.) *Dějiny Univerzity Karlovy IV. 1918–1990*. Praha: Univerzita Karlova; Míšková, A. (1998). Německá univerzita za druhé světové války, pp. 213–231 in Havránek, J. & Pousta, Z. (eds.) *Dějiny Univerzity Karlovy IV. 1918–1990*. Praha: Univerzita Karlova.

64. Archiv UK, Matrika doktorů Německé univerzity v Praze, (Registry book of doctors of the German University in Prague (1931–1936)), 5, p. 447. [http://is.cuni.cz/webapps/archiv/public/book/bo/1588437626346561/453/?lang=cs&pagenr2=447] (1. 2. 2020).
65. File of Wilhelm Söhnel. Archiv bezpečnostních složek MV (hereafter ABS MV), Z-10-194.
66. Bednařík, P. (2003), p. 86.
67. File of Wilhelm Söhnel. ABS MV, Z-10-194.
68. Ibid.
69. Interview of Zdeněka Štábla, Jaroslav Brož, and Myrtil Frída with Wilhelm Söhnel, s. d. [IFF Karlovy Vary, cca July 1968] Národní filmový archiv (hereafter NFA). Oral history collection, OS 14.
70. Czesany Dvořáková, T. (2011), pp. 68, 73, 162.
71. Ibid., pp. 65, 167.
72. Ibid., p. 162.
73. Lachman T. & Schwippel J. (2005) *Koruna-film, spol. s r. o. (1929) 1934–1950*. Hradištko pod Medníkem: NFA [archival fund inventory], pp. 4–5; Maříková M. (2005a) *Artur Heller-Film 1936–1941 (1946)*. Hradištko pod Medníkem: NFA [archival fund inventory], pp. IV-V; Maříková M. (2005b) *Beda Heller (1929) 1938–1942 (1946)*. Hradištko pod Medníkem: NFA [archival fund inventory], p. V; Škrabala P. *Continental-Film (Josef Kabeláč, výroba, obchod a půjčovna filmů) 1937–1946*. Hradištko pod Medníkem: NFA 2006 [archival fund inventory], p. IV. [https://nfa.cz/cz/sbirky/sbirky-a-fondy/fondy-instituci/] (7. 2. 2020).
74. For details on the circumstances surrounding the establishment, existence, and extinction of the Bohemian-Moravian Film Union see, Czesany Dvořáková T. (2011).
75. Protocol of interrogation with Emil Sirotek from 28 March 1946. ABS MV, 305-33-2,

76. Nařízení Reichsprotektora in Böhmen und Mähren o zřízení Českomoravského Filmového Ústředí ze dne 26. října 1940 (Order of the Reichsprotektor in Böhmen und Mähren establishing the Czech-Moravian Film Center from on 26 October 1940). *Verordnungsblatt des Reichsprotektors in Böhmen und Mähren / Věstník nařízení říšského protektora v Čechách a na Moravě*, 1941, No. 7, pp. 55–57.
77. Stanovy Českomoravského filmového ústředí z 20. února 1941 (Statutes of the Boheiman-Moravian Film Union from 20 February 1941). *Mitteilungen der Böhmisch-Mährischen Filmzentrale / Věstník Českomoravského filmového ústředí* Vol. 1 (1), pp. 3–6.
78. Interview of Zdeněk Štábla, Jaroslav Brož, and Myrtil Frída with Wilhelm Söhnel, s. d. [IFF Karlovy Vary, cca July 1968; edited by the author of this essay]. NFA, Oral history collection, OS 14.
79. Emil Sirotek was an active member of the anti-Nazi resistance, who was also imprisoned during the German occupation.
80. Czesany Dvořáková, T. (2011), pp. 266–306.
81. Verbindungsstelle des Reichprotektors in Böhmen und Mähren. NFA, ČMFÚ, IV./a.
82. Czesany Dvořáková, T. (2011), pp. 261–263.
83. In the case of both actresses, the relationship with a representative of the German-occupying power was perceived very negatively after the war, despite the fact that Söhnel was not convicted as an exponent of the occupation regime. Cf: Mandlová A. (1993). *Dneska už se tomu jenom směju*. s. l.: XYZ, pp. 122–123, 205–206.
84. List of employees of Reich Protector's Office (s. d.). NA, ÚŘP dod. I/ 5.
85. Wanatowiczová K. (2013). *Miloš Havel – český filmový magnát*. Praha: Knihovna Václava Havla, pp. 212–217.
86. File of Wilhelm Söhnel. ABS MV, Z-10-194.
87. Protocol of interrogation of Dr. Vilém Söhnel from 15 March 1946. ABS MV, 2 M 10221.
88. NA, Matrika narozených židovské obce v Praze – r. 1911 dívky/ 2582 (Jewish registries of births in Prague - 1911 girls/ 2588). [http://www.badatelna.eu/fond/1073/reprodukce/?zaznamId=3375&reproId=155218] (5. 2 0.2020).
89. Helena Bušová's mother declared the fatherhood invalid in order to save her daughter's life and career. Helena Bušová had to undergo racial identification, after which she was declared Aryan by the Germans.

    File of Wilhelm Söhnel. ABS MV, Z-10-194; *Zapomenutá hvězda Helena Bušová* (dir. Jindra Horská & Veronika Stehlíková, Czech television 2017). [https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ivysilani/11441814277-zapomenuta-hvezda-helena-busova/21656226240] (5. 2. 2020).
90. Wanatowiczová, K. (2013), pp. 225–226.

91. File of Wilhelm Söhnel. ABS MV, Z-10-194.
92. Tomek, P. (2001) „Případ Dr. Doležel a spol“ – vazební podmínky osob „Případu Krčmaň”, pp. 12–35 in *Securitas Imperii* 7.
93. Letter of Dr. h. c. Max Winkler for the Ufa COE A. Hauke from 5 November 1953. BArch, R 109 I/ 4665. Max Winkler was one of the most powerfull decision-makers in the Reich cinema industry. Among other things, he was a head of *Cautio Treuhand GmbH*, the German holding company, which centralized the film infractructure in Germany and its occupied territories.
94. Employee folder of Wilhelm Söhnel (15. 11. 1953–31. 5. 1966). BArch, R 109 I/ 4665. For more information about the situation of former Reich film companies see: Lexikon der Filmbegriffe: Lex Ufi [https://film-lexikon.uni-kiel.de/index.php?action=lexikon&tag=det&id=8298].

CHAPTER 6

Offers Difficult to Refuse: Miloš Havel and Clientele Transactional Networks in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia

Pavel Skopal

Miloš Havel was arguably the most influential person in the Czech film industry of the 1930s and the Protectorate era and, as his appointment as vice-president of the International Film Chamber (*Internationale Filmkammer*, IFK) in 1937 indicates, a person with strong connections and significant status in the European film industry. Born in 1899 into the family of wealthy civil engineering entrepreneur Václav Havel, Miloš entered the cinema business already in 1917 at age eighteen, when he became manager of the *Lucerna* cinema owned by his father. Two years later he founded a film distribution business of his own, the *American*

This work was supported by the Czech Science Foundation (Czech Cinema Culture and the German Occupation: A Research on Cultural Transfers; GA16-13375S). I wish to thank the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation for its support of research in Bundesarchiv Berlin.

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P. Skopal, R. Vande Winkel (eds.), *Film Professionals in Nazi-Occupied Europe*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61634-2_6

Film Company. Despite some setbacks (*American Film Company* went bankrupt in 1927), Havel rose to become a highly influential person during the 1920s in the area of film production and distribution, shaping the business through his membership in an array of film organizations, unions, or chambers.[1]

In 1921, Havel established the *A-B* joint-stock company with about a third of the stocks owned by himself. Although *A-B* produced movies, its main purpose was to keep the business of studios and laboratories working. The production facilities opened by *A-B* in Prague's Vinohrady district were in operation throughout the 1920s until the arrival of sound, and *A-B* company produced twenty silent movies there. However, the technological revolution of sound film demanded new infrastructure, and Miloš Havel, an enthusiastic promoter of sound cinema, launched the most influential business project of his life: the construction of new sound studios in Prague. In 1929, Havel gained control over the *A-B* company when he took ownership of 70 per cent of its shares. Ten years after its formation, the *A-B* company invested in *Barrandov Studios*, arguably one of the best equipped and most modern European film ateliers at the time. The studio complex opened its gates on 20 February 1933, from which time it significantly influenced film production standards in Czechoslovakia (and beyond).[2] Miloš Havel situated the new studios in the Prague district of Barrandov, where his brother, Václav Maria Havel,[3] owned real estate development sites and operated a restaurant.

Despite their technological superiority, the *Barrandov Studios* under the direction of *A-B* still had to face competition from three other atelier companies in Prague. In addition to the pre-existing studios *Favorit* and *Host*, the new *Foja* ateliers were opened in 1937. Although *A-B* was by far the most productive of the four companies (in 1937, e.g., thirty-seven movies were shot at *Barrandov*, compared to eight at *Foja*, five at *Host*, and only one in *Favorit*),[4] Havel decided to extend his activities and to renew the operation of the *Lucernafilm* company in 1937, which had originally been established by his parents and his uncle Richard Baláš in 1912. Over the next two years, *Lucernafilm* produced sixteen features, and from 1943 until the end of the war it was, together with *Nationalfilm* (headed by Karel Feix), one of only two Czech feature film production companies still in operation in the *Protektorát Čechy a Morava* (Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia). At the time of German occupation in 1939, Havel was arguably the most influential personality in the Czechoslovak national film industry, which was by then capable of producing up to fifty

movies a year. Considering that lobbying and networking were important aspects of the charismatic businessman's strategy, a close examination of the continuities and shifts in Havel's status during the radical change in political regime in 1939 and again in 1945 offers compelling insight into the measures, with which one local agent sought to maintain his network and capital, to preserve his pre-war period resources, and to keep established structures working under highly volatile circumstances. The concepts of patronage, brokers, and transactional networks provide the theoretical framework for the analysis of Havel's career during the period under consideration.[5]

Battles over the *Barrandov Studios*

On 16 March 1939, the day after the German military occupation of the Czech part of the Second Republic of Czechoslovakia,[6] Hitler decreed the establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia as a part of the German Reich.[7] On the same day, Miloš Havel received a phone call from *Barrandov Studios*. The technical director of the ateliers, Ladislav Hamr, informed him that Czech fascists had arrived to the studios with the intention to 'Aryanize' the company. The action was initiated by the leader of political party *Národní obec fašistická* (National Fascist Community) Radola Gajda who had authorized a director's assistant at the studio, Josef Kraus, to implement the order for Aryanization. Gajda additionally sent a member of the Czech fascists organization *Klub červenobílých* (Club of Red-White Ones) and film functionary Zdeněk Zástěra to support Kraus, who used a gun to forcibly occupy an office and threaten studios employees. Although this Aryanization attempt ultimately failed, at least twice during the occupation (in 1940 and 1942) the Czech fascist daily *Vlajka* strove to frame this event as a moment when 'our friend Josef Kraus […] drove the monsters out of their salons. Barrandov still remembers how the horrified representatives of "art" were running out […]'[8] and claimed that 'our friend Kraus […] arrived to the film business Jericho and fired the Jews one by one'.[9] This move to glorify the act did not name Kraus' accomplice Zdeněk Zástěra, who had in the meantime gotten into conflict with the fascist organization *Vlajka* (which published the daily of the same name) and died in 1942 in a concentration camp. In addition, the articles also fail to mention two other important facts: that Jewish directors Jiří Weiss and Walter Schorsch had already left Barrandov before these events to save their lives,[10] and that the Czech fascists were in fact easily expelled

from the studios shortly after their arrival. Upon being informed about the incident, Havel asked to have Zástěra put on the phone and ordered him and his companions to leave Barrandov immediately, and they followed his demand.[11] Havel used his authority to solve the situation from a distance. No more than three-and-a-half months later, however, Havel faced a much stronger enemy, the Reich administration personified by Hermann Glessgen, who was responsible for the film sector at the Department of Cultural Policy Affairs at the *Amt des Reichsprotektors/ Úřad říšského protektora* (Office of the Reich Protector).

On 28 June 1939, Glessgen announced to Havel that the *A-B* company was perceived by the Reich as Jewish property. This was based on a decree from the Reich Protector Konstantin von Neurath that established the rule that a company is perceived as 'Jewish' when a Jew was a member of its board of directors on 17 March 1939 or later. However, Havel had removed the only Jewish member of the board, Osvald Kosek, from the Commerce Register already the day before, on 16 March. In reaction, the Protector issued a new decree which shifted the decisive moment to 15 March and Karl Schulz was installed at Barrandov as *Treuhänder*, an ethnic German trustee appointed to take over management of a company defined as Jewish. However, Havel turned down all of Glessgen's many offers to buy-out Havel's share in the company even under rising pressure, including Glessgen's threat to imprison Havel based on allegations of homosexuality.[12]

Havel still owned a 70 per cent share of the company, while the German occupiers had sequestered 15 per cent as Jewish property and the rest was owned by minor shareholders. The Czech President of the Protectorate, Emil Hácha,[13] intervened on Havel's behalf and objected to the installation of a *Treuhänder* at the *A-B* company, where only four of 350 employees had been Jews. Havel's position in the negotiations were also bolstered by a client that he financially 'supported' named Paul Thümmel, who was a member of the military intelligence service *Abwehr* and a double-agent (and later executed by the Nazis in April 1945). It took almost a year for the Germans to complete the take-over of the desired super-modern Barrandov Film Studios. In April 1940, a deal was finally made between Havel, *Cautio Treuhand GmbH*,[14] and the Protectorate government: Havel received 6.88 mil. crowns for 51 per cent of shares in the company bought by the German trust company *Cautio* (Glessgen's original offer in summer 1939 was no more than 1.5 mil.). After the deal, the Protectorate government owned 29 per cent, and Havel retained 20 per cent of the shares. Havel was permitted to make up to five movies per year in the

studios with a 20 per cent discount on the rental price. Although Havel was not able to shape the deal with *Cautio* according to his financial objectives (he had demanded 25 mil. for his share in *A-B*), he was more successful in another negotiation due to the involvement of several of his patrons, including Jaroslav Kratochvíl, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Crafts. Kratochvíl backed Havel's compensation demands to the Ministry of Finance for losing his majority stock in *A-B*, and consequently in September 1940 Havel received another 8 mil. crowns from the Protectorate government. The final transfer of Havel's shares to the hands of the Nazis was completed in June 1941 as the *Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* (Reich Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda) was initiating its plans to expand the studio with the construction of new buildings. In the light of these plans, Havel's ongoing participation in the company was perceived by the Office of the Reich Protector as unacceptable, and he was bought out of the last 20 per cent for 5 mil. crowns.[15]

Havel's Transactional Networks

The above account of the battle of nerves, paragraphs, and resources over the *Barrandov Studios* intentionally highlighted the role of Havel's patrons to focus attention on Havel's position within the local transactional networks that had been abruptly restructured after the occupation. To understand his position as a client, as well as an influential agent patronizing his own clients in the Protectorate era, however, requires going back a few years and examining the transactional networks he participated in during the earlier part of the 1930s.

Havel's networking skills enabled him to establish important political connections, including among members of the *Československá národní demokracie* (Czechoslovak National Democratic Party, ČsND), to which he belonged. As a member of this party, he had the opportunity to become a client of other party members, including Vladislav Klumpar, director of *Ústřední sociální pojišťovna* (Central Insurance Company), who mediated favourable conditions for Havel to repay debts for *A-B*.[16] This affiliation also brought him into contact with personalities at the film department of *Ministerstvo průmyslu, obchodu a živností* (Ministry of Industry, Trade and Crafts), which was controlled by ČsND. The reputable weekly magazine *Přítomnost* (*Presence*), headed by the respected legend of Czech journalism Ferdinand Peroutka, reported critically about the connections between Havel's *A-B* company and the Ministry:

Fig. 6.1 Miloš Havel presents his new villa on Barrandov hill to his nephews, Ivan and Václav, 1941. (Knihovna Václava Havla/Archiv Ivana M. Havla)

> Decisions about public matters of film, as well as about the financial support of private business from public sources, are made neither by the ministry's referent, nor the minister of trade representing the *Czechoslovak National Democratic Party*. These decisions are made by a national-democratic oriented private company which was able to occupy all of the most important positions in the cinema industry's alphabet [*an allusion to Havel's company, A-B*] through the artful use of the political party's influence and through personal connections.[17]

On a few occasions, however, Havel faced opponents, who were supported by political patrons too strong to be outmatched, for example when his production vision for the prestigious and massively expensive film project *Svatý Václav* (*St. Wenceslas*) in 1928–1929 was defeated by ministry councillor Josef Hronek, who successfully promoted his competing approach to the project.[18] Nevertheless, in the period of the early 1930s, which turned out to be decisive for his career, Havel was able to push through his plans for the construction of the Barrandov Studios and to successfully lobby for the contingent regulations, which linked film import with the requirement to invest in domestic movie production in Czechoslovakia, that is with the de facto necessity to use his new studios. He was widely perceived as a phantom element pulling the strings of the industry with the help of his political patrons, including **Č**sND member Josef Matoušek who was the Minister of Trade from 1929 to 1934 (the period when the Barrandov Studios were built).[19] This widely shared perception of Havel's position intensified during the transformative period of the early 1930s when the contingent system was introduced (in 1932) and then later replaced by a registration system (in 1934). Havel founded an organization named *Svaz filmové výroby* (Film Production Union) in 1934, which had the capacity to influence film politics. Another way of building up contacts and strengthening his influence in the cinema industry was his membership in professional organizations, including *Sdružení premiérových biografů* (Association of Premiere Cinemas) and *Filmové studio* (Film Studio)—in both of which he held the position of president—as well as *Syndikát čs. půjčoven* (Syndicate of the Czechoslovak Rental Companies), *Ústřední svaz kinematografů* (Central Union of Cinema Owners), *Filmový poradní sbor* (Film Advisory Council, FPS), *Filmová liga československá* (Czechoslovak Film League), and *Filmový klub* (Film Club). In July 1937 he was elected vice-president of the *Internationale Filmkammer* (International Film Chamber, IFK).[20] As a leading film journal's critique

of Havel's lobbying practices clearly suggests, Havel's networking capacity was widely recognized and contributed to his status: 'All of Miloš Havel's activities are accompanied by mystery and, very often, by the charm and influence of his personal contacts'.[21]

Another issue which significantly influenced Havel's public image, and for which he was both respected and criticized, was his intensive contacts with the German film milieu. These connections to German politics and film affairs caused clashes with the *Ministerstvo zahraničí* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and led to public criticism. The Ministry worried about its control over foreign film policy due to Havel's tremendous influence in these affairs,[22] while the weekly *Přítomnost* accused the *A-B* company of creating a dictatorship through the contingent regulations, which forced importers to produce one movie in Czechoslovakia for every five it imported. Since American producers withdrew from this regulated market, most of the imports under this system came from Germany. The author of the article in *Přítomnost* harshly criticized the perceived submissive policy towards the Reich, which allegedly provided fuel for separatist tendencies within the German-speaking parts of Czechoslovakia by allowing the import of such a vast amount of German productions.[23] Havel nevertheless maintained contacts with German representatives, which in July 1938 resulted in the FPS[24] at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Crafts asking him and another FPS member, Emil Sirotek, to negotiate the conditions of film export with the *Reichsfilmkammer* (Reich Film Chamber) and the Reich Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda.[25] In January 1939, no more than two months before the occupation, Havel held talks with directors of the German companies *Tobis* and *Klangfilm* in Prague and made agreements for shooting German films at the Barrandov Studios.[26]

After the occupation, Havel's network was inevitably damaged, especially in the political arena. A new level had been added to the power structure that influenced film policy—or, rather, two levels, which occasionally clashed over the control of Czech cinema: the *Office of the Reichsprotector*, and Goebbels' *Reich Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda*, both of which had dominion over the Czech government of the Protectorate.[27] Havel, though now limited in his resources and stripped of the Barrandov Studios, was nevertheless appointed to several representative positions within the official structures organized by the Nazi administration. For example, in July 1941 he became a member of the delegation representing the Protectorate at the IFK, plus, he remained

on the board of directors *A-B* until July 1942 even after it had been re-branded *Prag-Film* in 1941.[28] More importantly, he was able to maintain some of his old contacts and managed to establish new ones within the reshaped industrial and political structures. Within the Protectorate administration, his most important patrons were the lawyer and secretary to president Hácha, Josef Kliment, who lobbied on Havel's behalf within the government in the matter of Barrandov,[29] and Jaroslav Kratochvíl, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Crafts and friend of Miloš's brother Václav.[30] In addition to Kratochvíl, Václav M. Havel included another Protectorate's government minister as his personal friends: the Minister of Social and Health Administration Vladislav Klumpar, who advised both brothers in financial matters in the late 1930s.[31]

Due to a reorganization of the Protectorate government in January 1942, however, Kratochvíl and Klumpar did not remain in the government anymore. Meanwhile, Miloš Havel found some new patrons within the German administration. In addition to the above-mentioned Paul Thümmel, he also maintained close connections with another Abwehr agent named Augustin Seidl, who the Gestapo forcibly appointed as director of Havel's *Lucerna* company. Both Havel brothers admitted that Seidl occasionally helped them attain certain material advantages; for example, they were able to hunt venison and serve it in their restaurants, instead of being forced to turn it over to authorities.[32]

Havel was occasionally a patron himself: he employed a number of writers in *Lucernafilm* just to provide them with regular income, or to save them from forced labour in the Reich; he provided money to support the resistance; and gave loans to employees.[33] In other cases, he provided financial support or help finding work when acquaintances, colleagues, or friends asked him for it.[34] Havel's resources for patronizing were rather limited. He was, nevertheless, very active and effective as a broker, able to mediate patronage from (German) individuals, who had more power and resources than he did. Havel widely employed both his personal charisma and his luxurious property in order to win the grace and support of his patrons, or to negotiate patronage for others. In general, Havel had the power to offer German officials access to the lavish world of film stars—the most notorious being Wilhelm Söhnel,[35] who had romantic affairs with two of the biggest film stars of the era, Adina Mandlová and Nataša Gollová. Havel regularly hosted both the cream of film society and top German film culture officials either at his villa in Barrandov or at the *Filmklub* (Film Club) in the Lucerna palace.[36]

Havel's main opponent in the post-war lawsuit, film director Elmar Klos, sarcastically commented on Havel's tactics in his memoirs:

> As an experienced strategist, he knew the rules of manoeuvring, and as a skilful negotiator, he was aware of tools for building useful contacts. […] He guessed with striking precision the greediness and self-indulgence of the overmen and sensitively identified the proper kind of corruption for each of them – from smaller or bigger favours or presents, to the pleasurable company of attractive young ladies or direct, shameless bribing. […] At the moment when Havel's Lucernabar in Vodičkova street was in danger due to the seizing of nightclubs for the war effort, he changed the bar into an exclusive Film Club designated for social contacts between the Czech and the German actors and filmmakers […] The spot received prominent deliveries of imported drinks and food in short supply. Thanks to this, an ideal, prospering playground was prepared for its owner to […] spin the web of his behind-the-doors diplomacy and personal policy. It needs to be admitted that he did not use his contacts with Germans for his own good only. When necessary, he knew how to interfere in the interest of Czech artists that came under the spotlight of the occupying power. During the last years of the war he provided the bread and butter for many important writers, including those from the extreme left side of the political spectrum, and sheltered them from the labour office by signing contracts that he did not ask to be fulfilled.[37]

This presentation provided by Klos, who definitely was not fond of Havel, offers a critical, and yet rather balanced, reflection on Havel's tactics—and even Klos admitted that Havel was brokering on numerous occasions to the benefit of Czech filmmakers and writers. The editor-in-chief of the anti-Semitic *Árijský boj* (Aryan Struggle) confessed in the post-war lawsuit against Havel that the film tycoon asked him to halt attacks on the film star Oldřich Nový and the poet Vítězslav Nezval, and that he complied with the request (Fig. 6.2).[38] Film director Otakar Vávra wrote with appreciation in his autobiography about the good contact Havel had to the Gestapo agent Seidl, who, according to Vávra's account, withdrew denunciations against Vávra thanks to Havel.[39] In January 1945, Havel publicly affirmed the patronage of Söhnel and Anton Zankl[40] for Czech filmmakers when in a meeting at FPS he thanked those two German officials (in addition to two Czech producers, Karel Feix and Vilém Brož) for their intervention at the *Německé státní ministerstvo pro Čechy a Moravu/Deutsches Staatsministerium für Böhmen und Mähren* (German

Fig. 6.2 From right: Miloš Havel, surrealist poet Vítězslav Nezval, Havel's nephews Václav and Ivan and their mother Božena Havlová, the film director František Čáp, and photographer Balcar at the Havel family residence Havlov, early 1940s. (Knihovna Václava Havla/Archiv Ivana M. Havla)

State Ministry for Bohemia and Moravia) on Oldřich Nový's behalf, advocating for his status as an 'indispensable representative' of Czech comedy and thereby saving him from being drafted into the war effort.[41] In 1943, Havel asked Söhnel to shelter Czech film production from possible attacks from film reviewers. To this end, the two made a deal that all film reviews should be approved by the *Česko-moravské filmové ústředí/Böhmisch-mährische Filmzentrale* (Bohemian-Moravian Film Union) before publication; these measures were never implemented, but in December 1944 Havel proposed at an FPS meeting that he had the authority to activate this deal.[42] This clearly implies how much Havel relied on Söhnel's patronage, as well as on his own capacity for brokering. It goes without saying that this capacity had its limits, which Havel likely respected and rather rarely tested. He did push the limits at least once, though: according to

Vávra's recollection, Havel tried to intercede on behalf of the actor Anna Letenská, who was investigated in connection with the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, but 'the Gestapo men warned him immediately that it is a vain effort'.[43] The experience of being forced to sell off the Barrandov Studios also taught Havel a lesson about the limited effectivity of his resources within the new administration structures. Another area that tested his capacity to change the established rules of the game was film export. Here he had a clash of interests with another influential broker: the *Transit* company.

Ambitions to Export: Havel Versus Transit

Film export and import played an essential role in Havel's business activities throughout his career. His negotiations with politicians, producers, and film functionaries in these matters allowed him to apply his charisma and energy, as well as his managerial and communication skills,[44] and to capitalize on his already established transaction network. In fact, Havel's very first independent activity in the film business was the import of movies from the American company *Universal* in 1918.[45]

When Havel renewed the activities of the production company *Lucernafilm* in 1937 and, above all, as his control of the Barrandov Film Studios was being increasingly undermined after the inception of the Protectorate, film export and the production of potentially exportable movies became more important in his business portfolio than ever before. Furthermore, in the early stage of the occupation Czech film producers believed that the export possibilities for domestic production would increase. The fact that the very opposite turned out to be true situated Havel in a position of opposition to the Reich company *Transit.*

Representatives of the Czech film industry initially believed that the Reich's administration in the Protectorate would keep its promises for the autonomy of Czech culture, not only with regard to film production, but also in the management of film export. In September 1939, the director of the Czech production company *Nationalfilm*, Karel Feix, authored an article in a leading film journal, in which he addressed 'export opportunities' and called for the establishment of an export department within a newly proposed film chamber, which would be in charge of planning export abroad, including 'to the empire with 80 million people', that is to the Nazi Reich. According to his vision, increased profits from export

would result in an overall improvement in the quality of Czech film production.[46]

Miloš Havel was no less optimistic about the possibilities of Czech film export. At an FPS meeting in 1939, he demanded the securing of financial resources which would ensure the creation of 'films of better quality and possibly with more luxurious sets'.[47] Under these conditions, the movies 'would have a chance to increase exploitation both in the empire and abroad; according to the promises given by the Germans, the import of Czech films to Germany [to the Sudetenland as well as to Reich, as Havel phrased it] should not be restricted if the films are of a better quality'.[48] Accordingly, the whole system of state support was adjusted to avoid the slightest delay in export: the *Ministry of Industry, Trade and Crafts* gave up any preliminary review of the supported movies, because of the risk that this could cause a delay that might jeopardize an export deal.[49]

Contrarily to the hopes of Czech producers, however, the German authorities maintained a ban on film export until 1942. Even Protectorate president Emil Hácha's direct appeal to *Reich Protector* Konstantin von Neurath in December 1940 was unable to affect the situation.[50] Shortly after that, the Reich Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels, following his intention to make Germany the dominant production country for Europe, confirmed the ongoing validity of the ban.[51] When the ban was finally lifted in 1942, at least thirty-four Czech movies were exported to twelve European countries.[52] For the first time ever, audiences in a substantial portion of Europe got the chance to become acquainted with Czech movies, and Havel's *Lucernafilm* was by far the most successful of the exporting production companies—with nineteen movies of the total thirty-four exported, it comprised more than half of the overall export volume. Nevertheless, distribution was not coordinated to the benefit of Czech producers. The German *Transit* company was the agency responsible for regulating the process and dividing the exported movies among distribution companies based in the Reich and in the occupied countries.[53]

The company was established as *Transit Deutsche Filmimportgesellschaft* in November 1940 (renamed to *Transit-Film GmbH* in March 1942) under the control of Goebbels and the *Reichsbeauftragter für die deutsche Filmwirtschaft* (Reich Commissioner for the German Film Industry), Max Winkler, with the purpose of regulating the appropriate number of film imports into the Reich. Only two national production regions were excluded from *Transit*'s monopoly over import to the Reich: the French *Continental* company and Italian movies, which were imported by *Difu*

and *Cefi*. In general, *Transit* gave preference in delegating the imported movies to two companies—*Deutscher Filmvertrieb GmbH* and *Märkische Filmgesellschaft*—and what films remained were offered to other rental companies.[54] The Reich's leading film journal *Film-Kurier* announced that *Transit*'s purpose is to prevent conflicts between producers and distributors, resolve problems with foreign exchange, and provide advice and recommendations regarding movies deemed appropriate for distribution.[55]

The true role of the company, however, was quite a different one: to be an instrument of transition in service of the Reich's film policy to centralize, control, and coordinate the European market. This intention is obvious due to various indicators, including the fact that the same approach to regulation was included in Hermann Glessgen's conception of film policy for the Protectorate written already in 1939. When Glessgen took over administration of the Czech film industry, which at the time had the high productivity level of forty movies a year,[56] he needed to eliminate the risk of increasing competition for the Reich's movies on the market. To this end, he proposed plans for an export company that would have a monopoly over domestic production to create a situation whereby 'the export of inappropriate movies would simply be denied by the monopoly with no need of an official prohibition'.[57] Glessgen explained to Günther Schwarz that the purpose of this company would be to serve as a tool for influencing export and, consequently, decreasing production within the Protectorate. However, once *Transit* became capable of fulfilling this same role, there was no need for such a new company that would be focused exclusively on the Protectorate.

Czech producers perceived *Transit* as a helpful broker so long as they believed that it could open the door to the Reich's market for them. Havel negotiated with *Transit* on behalf of *Lucernafilm* and other producers (*Nationalfilm*, *Lloydfilm* and *Bromfilm*) and achieved a deal of 15,000 RM for European distribution rights and a 25 per cent share of receipts in the Reich.[58] *Transit* was, however, expected to follow the rule that foreign movies should never be more than just a supplement to German movies in the Reich's cinemas.[59] Havel's resources were by no means sufficient to affect the decisions that *Transit* made in its role as a tool for the intentions of the *Reich Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda*.

Nevertheless, as was typical for Havel, he did attempt to use his resources to influence the situation. In 1944 he complained about *Transit* to the German State Ministry for Bohemia and Moravia and proposed a

new, Prague-based company that would be responsible for Czech film exports instead of *Transit*. He stated that another company would be able to acquire significantly higher receipts for screenings of two *Lucernafilm* movies, *Noční motýl* (Nocturnal Butterfly, 1941) and *Krok do tmy* (A Step into the Darkness, 1938), in Reich cinemas.[60] In a letter to a ministry executive at the *Reich Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda*, Havel expressed discontent about the fact that *Transit* did not keep its promise to accept at least nine movies for import to the Reich, as only two had been accepted so far.[61] Ultimately, no more than three Czech movies played in Reich cinemas during the war—*A Step into the Darkness*, *Nocturnal Butterfly*, and *Modrý závoj* (The Blue Veil, 1941) (the latter being produced by *Elekta*, not by *Lucernafilm*).[62] Havel's resources, contacts, authority, charm, and negotiating capacities were not strong or influential enough to effectively oppose *Transit*'s mandate.

After the War

The post-war Czechoslovak political administration managed to nationalize the entire film industry, including the Barrandov Studios, within three months from the end of the war. President Edvard Beneš issued the decree to nationalize the film industry on 11 August 1945. Havel was not involved in any of the three conceptions of post-war film industry regulations that were developed during the war simultaneously in London, Prague, and Zlín (of course, only covertly for the latter two locations). Instead, he proposed his own model to the *Národní výbor českých filmových pracovníků* (National Committee of Czech Film Workers) on 9 May 1945, whereby the state would only have a majority share of the industry; however this proposal came too late to influence the situation. The film industry came under the authority of the *Ministerstvo informací* (Ministry of Information), which was controlled by the Communist Party—a situation substantially unfavourable for Havel.[63] He was already arrested for five days in July 1945 by the *Komise pro vnitřní národní bezpečnost* (Commission for Internal National Security), and a criminal prosecution for charges of collaboration was launched against him in spring 1946 and discontinued in December 1947. Although he was never found formally guilty of a criminal act, the disciplinary commission at the *Svaz českých filmových pracovníků* (Czech Film Workers' Union) excluded him from any activity in the branch of cinema already in 17 October 1945 for 'acts incompatible with the national honour of Czech film workers'.[64] Those, whom Havel

had patronized in the Protectorate era now had a good chance to reciprocate the favour, and many of them did, including the poet Vítězslav Nezval, who had become the head of the film department at the *Ministry of Information*. But none of Havel's previous clients, not even Nezval, was influential enough to help Havel establish himself within the emerging political and industrial networks.[65]

In response to an offer in 1949 from the Israeli ambassador to build up film studios there, Havel applied for a passport in order to travel to Israel, but his request was denied.[66] He attempted to illegally flee Czechoslovakia in July 1949, but was captured at the border and imprisoned for two years. After serving some time in prison, he was moved to a forced-labour camp and later released in November 1951 due to his health problems. A second escape attempt, in August 1951, was successful, when Havel, together with his partner Dušan Hubáček and former film director Jan Antonín Holman, managed to safely cross the border into Austria. Havel and Hubáček then settled in Munich. In Germany, Havel established the film company *Lucerna-Film GmbH*, which produced three movies, all of which were financial failures. With the help of the lawyer and former employee of the Protectorate administration Wilhelm Söhnel, Havel litigated with the *Ufa-Film GmbH* (Ufi) and Cautio over additional payment for the coerced sale of the *A-B* company and for royalties from the Protectorate era movies *A Step into the Darkness* and *Nocturnal Butterfly*, which had been distributed in post-war Germany and Austria. In 1955, Havel received significant financial compensation, but due to a series of failed business projects, he died a pauper in 1968 as the owner of a small flower shop in Munich.

Conclusion

Havel's activities in the 1920s and 1930s were oriented towards building up a transactional network, which made it possible for him or to patronize certain individuals, or to motivate other influential personalities (most importantly from the political realm) to patronize him. Havel had support from the only liberal party in the Czechoslovak political scene of the 1930s, the ČsND. During the Protectorate, however, Havel was deprived of the main resource of his agency, the Barrandov Studios by the end of 1940, and lost most of his Czech political patrons when the Protectorate government was reorganized in January 1942. He was allowed to keep other assets, however, including *Lucernafilm*, which produced twenty-eight movies from 1940 to 1944, the highest number made by any Czech

film production company of the era. Although he lost support within the heteronomous world of politics, he was able to maintain his transactional network inside the field of films thanks to the fact that the model of film production did not change substantially in terms of the overall system or (non-Jewish) personnel during the Protectorate. With a few exceptions, such as the Jew Hugo Haas and the leftist-avantgarde team Jiří Voskovec and Jan Werich, most of the leading Czech stars (including Adina Mandlová, Lída Baarová, Vlasta Burian, etc.) made a seamless transition to film production in the Protectorate. The occupation powers preferred the Sudeten Germans Söhnel and Zankl over Czechs (but also over Reich Germans)[67] as supposedly better mediators between the Reich film administration and the Czech film industry. Havel was able to secure patronage from both Söhnel and Zankl for himself as well as for others and, thereby, to somewhat replace the connections to political patrons that he had lost under the new conditions. Still, his capacity for agency had clearly demarcated limits: the German occupying powers would not allow their economic and political control of the Protectorate to be compromised, as the three incidents described above clearly illustrate—the forced sale of the Barrandov Studios, the restrictions on film export to the Reich, and the arrest of the actress Anna Letenská.

The second major disruption of Havel's network in mid-1945 was much more destructive and irreparable for him than the one brought by the German occupation. It also proved to be worse for him than the disruption in the aftermath of the Communist putsch in 1948, which was just a radicalization of the post-war anti-liberal, collectivist ethos, rather than a complete break or shift in values.[68] Although most of Havel's clients returned to him after 1945 and confirmed his 'national reliability', the change of the social structures was by far too radical to enable Havel to restore his position as patron and broker. The transactional networks within the film industry that had survived from the 1930s or were established by Havel during the occupation were submitted to radical reinterpretation and deemed as reprehensible, regardless of the gains and advantages they brought to Czech clients. The demand for 'retribution' against Havel came from both the film and the political fields, represented by, among others, the director Elmar Klos and the Minister of Information Václav Kopecký respectively. The ownership of production facilities was often perceived as an act of collaboration by participants in the resistance,[69] a stance that was adopted by the film workers involved in the underground planning of the nationalization of the industry, as well as by the

communist minister Kopecký, who upon his return from exile in Moscow confronted Havel with the viewpoint that having maintained financial capital during the occupation is in itself suspicious.[70] The crisis of liberal democracy throughout East-Central Europe, together with the moral delegitimization of film stars (with all of the three biggest film stars mentioned above—Mandlová, Baarová, and Burian—being imprisoned at least briefly), allowed no opportunity for Havel to restructure his transactional networks.

Notes

1. For the history of Miloš Havel's activities in the Czech film industry, see Horníček, J. (2000) *Miloš Havel a český filmový průmysl*. MA thesis. Charles University: Praha; Wanatowiczová, K. (2013) *Miloš Havel – český filmový magnát*. Praha: Knihovna Václava Havla; Havel, V.M. (2018) *Mé vzpomínky*. Praha: Knihovna Václava Havla; and Czesany Dvořáková, T. Barrandov and its Founder Miloš Havel, in Bernd Herzogenrath (ed.), *Hollywood in Eastern Europe: The Barrandov Studios*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press (Forthcoming). When not indicated otherwise, bibliographical data in the chapter comes from these publications.
2. For the influence of the studios on Czech production and its stylistic characteristics, see Kokeš, R.D. Barrandov on the Horizon: Czech Cinema as a Regional Cinema and Problem of Continuities in (Writing) its Stylistic History, in Herzogenrath, B. (ed.), *Hollywood in Eastern Europe: The Barrandov Studios*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. (Forthcoming)
3. Miloš's brother, and father of dramatist and politician Václav Havel.
4. Národní filmový archiv (hereafter NFA), Filmový poradní sbor, box 3, file 19, report '**Č**eskoslovenské filmové hospodářství v r. 1937', p. 2.
5. On the role of the patronage system as a mechanism for distributing scarce goods in a totalitarian regime and the broker function assumed by leading members of cultural professions, see, e.g., Fitzpatrick, S. (2000) Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Tomoff, K. (2002) 'Most Respected Comrade…': Patrons, Clients, Brokers and Unofficial Networks in the Stalinist Music World. *Contemporary European History* 2 (1), pp. 33–65. Katherine Stovel and Lynette Shaw provide a good overview of discussions on transactional networks and brokerage in the field of sociology in: Stovel – Shaw (2012) Brokerage. *Annual Review of Sociology* 38, p. 140. For a more general explanation of the concepts and their merits for doing research on agency in the occupied societies, see the first chapter of this volume.

6. This was the official title of the rump Czechoslovak Republic resulting from the Munich Agreement in September 1938 and the subsequent loss of territory.
7. This was, however, only nominally a 'protectorate', with certain similarities to France's Protectorate in Tunisia since 1881. The Czech lands lost their international subjectivity and the Czech position was rather one of suzerainty. See Maršálek, P. (2002) *Protektorát Čechy a Morava. Státoprávní a politické aspekty nacistického okupačního režimu v českých zemích.* Praha: Karolinum, pp. 25–26. For more details on the occupation and its impact on the film industry, see the chapter 'How to Mediate the Bohemian-Moravian Film Culture?' in this volume.
8. -m. (16 March 1940) 16. březen – konec Židů na Barrandově in *Vlajka*.
9. *Vlajka*, 26 April 1942, quoted in Motl, S. (2006), *Mraky nad Barrandovem*. Praha: Rybka Publishers, pp. 42–43.
10. See, for example, Weiss's memoir: Weiss, J. (1995) *Bílý Mercedes.* Praha: Victoria Publishing, p. 41.
11. Havel commented on the event in his post-war testimony as follows: 'I was not there at Barrandov at that moment, but the director Hamr reported on phone about the situation, I talked to Dr. Zástěra and expelled him from the factory.' Concept of Miloš Havel's defence, 1945, quoted in Wanatowiczová (2013), p. 130.
12. Havel married in 1934. The marriage was, however, rather a matter of social conventions and his homosexuality was an open secret (and he divorced in the early stages of WWII).
13. Lawyer and president of the Supreme Administrative Court Hácha was elected as president in November 1938, more than three months before the occupation and briefly after the previous president Edvard Beneš' abdication, and he held the position until the end of the war.
14. The trust company, headed by the later Reich Delegate to the German film industry Max Winkler, was established in 1936, from which time it was used to build up the state monopoly of film production and to control production facilities. See Vande Winkel, R. & D. Welch (2007) Europe's New Hollywood? The German Film Industry Under Nazi Rule, 1933–45, pp. 18–23 in Vande Winkel, R. & D. Welch, *Cinema and the Swastika. The International Expansion of Third Reich Cinema*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
15. For a detailed history of the taking over of Barrandov Studios by *Cautio*, see Bednařík, P. (2003) *Arizace české kinematografie*. Praha: Karolinum, pp. 39–56. See also Dvořáková, T. – Klimeš, I. (2008) *Prag-Film AG 1941–1945. Im Spannungsfeld zwischen Protektorats- und Reichs-Kinematografie*. München: Richard Boorberg Verlag, pp. 39–44.
16. Wanatowiczová (2013), pp. 50–52, 124.

17. Walter, J. (1934) Filmová diktatura v ČSR – I, pp. 154–156 in *Přítomnost* 11 (10).
18. See Kos, M. (2020) Ochránit křesťanskou ideu proti čachrům židovské kšeft-kliky. *Svatý Václav* jako střet ambicí, představ a zájmů, pp. 41–60 in *Iluminace* 32 (1).
19. Wanatowiczová (2013), p. 74; Klimeš, I. (2016) *Kinematografie a stát v českých zemích 1895–1945*. Praha: Univerzita Karlova, pp. 184–185.
20. NFA, FPS, box 2, file 17, 117. session, 15 July 1937, p. 4.
21. Menčík, J. A. (1935) Cesta k reparacím, p. 1 in *Filmová politika* 32 (2).
22. Horníček (2000), pp. 71–74.
23. Walter, J. (1934) Filmová diktatura v ČSR – II, pp. 167–169 in *Přítomnost* 11 (11); Walter, J. (1934) Filmová diktatura v ČSR – III, pp. in 187–190 *Přítomnost* 11 (12).
24. An important institution which, starting in 1935, distributed state financial support to film projects.
25. 156. FPS meeting 21 July 1938, box 3, file 20; 162. FPS meeting 19 October 1938, box 3, file 21.
26. Štábla, Z. (1990) *Data a fakta z dějin čs. kinematografie 1896–1945, sv. 4*. Praha: Československý filmový ústav, p. 60.
27. See, for example, Czesany Dvořáková, T. (2002) Německá dohoda o budoucnosti kinematografie protektorátu, pp. 101–106 in *Iluminace* 14 (4). For reorganization of the culture's administration, see Czesany Dvořáková, T. (2011) *Idea filmové komory. Českomoravské filmové ústředí a kontinuita centralizačních tendencí ve filmovém oboru 30. a 40. let*. PhD Thesis. Praha: FF UK; and the chapter by Dvořáková and Mohn in this volume.
28. See Martin, B.G. (2016) *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture*. Cambridge—London: Harvard University Press, p. 190; Dvořáková & Klimeš (2008), p. 57.
29. Kliment, who was sentenced to life in prison after the war for collaboration, commented in his unpublished memoirs about the negotiation for reparations for Havel: 'I can remember these issues in detail due to the fact that I personally argued in favour of the issue to all the members of government'. Quoted in Wanatowiczová (2013), *Miloš Havel*, p. 151.
30. Havel, V.M. (2018), p. 124. For the support of film production by Kratochvíl and his ministry, see Klimeš, I. (1999) Stát a filmová kultura, pp. 125–136 in *Iluminace* 11 (2).
31. Havel, V.M. (2018), p. 723.
32. Born Gustav Sedláček, he became a Gestapo confident in 1942 and changed his name to Seidl. See Wanatowiczová (2013), Miloš Havel, pp. 247–259.

33. See Wanatowiczová (2013), Miloš Havel, pp. 224–228, 253; Havel, V.M. (2018), p. 127.
34. For cases documented in the correspondence of *Lucernafilm*, see NFA, Lucernafilm, box 10, file 77. Many other examples of such patronage are provided by the testimonies collected for the post-war lawsuit against Havel. See more details on this below.
35. The Sudeten German Söhnel, a lawyer by profession, became *Treuhänder* for several Czech film companies and, more importantly, he became the head of *Verbindungsstelle des Reichsprotektors in Böhmen und Mähren bei der Böhmisch-Mährischen Filmzentrale* (Reichsprotector's Joint Office in the Bohemian-Moravian Film Union). The office was entitled to mediate any contact between the Film Union and German or foreign entities.
36. Wanatowiczová (2013), pp. 213–214, 217–221, 268–274, 277–78; Havel, V.M. (2018), p. 125.
37. Klos, E. (2011) Dovětek za tečkou, p. 204 in Lukeš J. (ed.), *Černobílý snář Elmara Klose*. Praha: NFA.
38. Wanatowiczová (2013), *Miloš Havel*, p. 304.
39. Vávra, O. (1996) *Podivný život režiséra*. Praha: Prostor, p. 115. Letenská was imprisoned and murdered in Mauthausen. See Čvančara, J. Z jeviště na popraviště. Příběh herečky Anny Čalounové-Letenské, pp. 101–115 in *Paměť a dějiny* 2009 (2).
40. Zankl, a Sudeten German like Söhnel, replaced Glessgen as deputy head of the Abteilung für kulturpolitische Angelegenheiten (Department for Cultural Policy Affairs) in the Office of the Reich Protector. For more details on both Zankl and Söhnel, see the chapter by Dvořáková and Mohn in this volume.
41. FPS meeting of the union's group for film production, 11 January 1945. FPS, box 5, file 28.
42. FPS meeting of the union's group for film production, 8 December 1944. NFA, FPS, box 5, file 27.
43. Vávra, O. (1996), p. 121.
44. These characteristics are repeatedly reported in reflections on his personality by his friends and relatives, as well as by people who did not yield to his personal charm. See, for example, the characteristics described by Miloš's brother Václav and by *Lucernafilm* employee and scriptwriter Jiří Brdečka. Václav Havel: 'Miloš knew how to win real friends and admirers in the important areas of art, economy, and politics'. Havel, V.M. (2018), p. 128; Brdečka: 'He had no illusions about the people he met, but he certainly had as good insight into their qualities, as he had into film business, and was able to pick the right man for the right position'. Brdečka, J. (1992) *Pod tou starou Lucernou*. Praha: Primus, p. 66.
45. Horníček, J. (2000), pp. 15–18.

46. Feix, K. (1939) Možnost vývozu. *Filmový kurýr* 13 (35), p. 1.
47. 179. FPS meeting 2 May 1939, pp. 2–3. NFA, FPS, box 4, file 22.
48. Ibid.
49. Směrnice na podporu výroby českých celovečerních filmů (1941), §10, odst. 5, in Havelka, J. (1946) *Filmové hospodářství v zemích českých a na Slovensku 1939 až 1945*. Praha: Čs. filmové nakladatelství, p. 15.
50. Hácha complained in the talk with Neurath on 17 December 1940 that '[t]he question of the export of valuable Czech movies has not yet been decided by the Reich administration. The existing demand for the movies from abroad implies that loosening the export restriction would make foreign exchange economy stronger'. In Otáhalová, L. & Červinková, M. (1966) *Dokumenty z historie československé politiky 1939–1943*. Praha: Academia, p. 591.
51. See: Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren. Unsigned report, received on 22 April 1941. Kulturpolitik im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren. Unsigned report, received on 2 December 1941. BArch R 109 I/1615.
52. A preliminary report on productivity of the company Transit-Film GmbH. Berlin, 31 May 1944, BArch R I/2561.
53. Drewniak, B. (1987) *Der deutsche Film 1938–1945. Ein Gesamtüberblick*. Düsseldorf: Droste, p. 816.
54. See: report on books of accounts' audit and balance of the account year 1942/43. BArch, R 109 I/2452; auditor's report on *Transit*'s business activities, 6 February 1953, BArch, R109 I/4552.
55. Gründung der ‚Transit'. *Film-Kurier* 22 (269), 15 November 1940.
56. The number of films produced in 1939 was forty-one. After the inception of the Protectorate, the level of productivity steadily decreased in accordance with the plans of the occupying administration: to thirty-one films in 1940, twenty-one in 1941, eleven in 1942, ten in 1943, and only nine in 1944. See Havelka, J. (1946), p. 27.
57. Hermann Glessgen, Filmová politika v Čechách a na Moravě, p. 510. See also: Filmová produkce v protektorátu, BArch, R 109 I/1615, a report on negotiations of *Reichsfilmkammer* representative Günther Schwarz with Hermann Glessgen on 5 December 1939, where Glessgen presented the company's role as a tool for decreasing the quantity of Czech film production.
58. NFA, Lucernafilm, box 17, file 101.
59. Auditor's report on *Transit*'s business activities, 6 February 1953, BArch, R109 I/4552.
60. A letter from 28 March 1944. NFA, f. Lucernafilm, box 17, file 101.
61. Havel ministerskému radovi ministerstva lidové osvěty a propagandy Friesovi. NFA, Lucernafilm, box 17, file 101.

62. The premiere dates in the Reich were: *A Step into the Darkness* (under the German title *Schritt ins Dunkel*)—15 January 1943, *Nocturnal Butterfly* (*Nachtfalter*)—12 March 1943, and *The Blue Veil* (*Der blaue Schleier*)—8 September 1944. Screenings of *Nocturnal Butterfly* were stopped after eleven months, while *A Step into the Darkness* was withdrawn after twenty-three months. See: report on *Transit-Film GmbH*'s economic results for December 1944, BArch, R 109 I/2561; preliminary report on *Transit-Film GmbH*'s economic results, Berlin, 31 May 1944, ibid.; an expert witness' evaluation on *Transit-Film's* activities, 6 February 1952, BArch, R 109 I/4552.
63. Václav Kopecký, the Minister of Information, demonstrated his attitude towards Havel immediately when they first met on 30 June 1945 at Barrandov, when, according to Václav M. Havel recollections, Kopecký reprimanded Miloš for his activities during the occupation. See Havel, V.M. (2018), p. 131.
64. Horníček, J. (2000), p. 112. See also, Černá, Z. (2016) Disciplinární rada Svazu českých filmových pracovníků a případ Oldřicha Papeže, pp. 149–157 in *Iluminace* 28 (1); Wanatowiczová (2013), p. 325.
65. Nezval testified that he was released from prison during the occupation 'only thanks to Mr. Miloš Havel, who made it possible strictly through his official contacts at influential German administrative positions. He was subordinated to German officials and he knew how to negotiate with them on behalf of Czech film and on behalf of the families of Czech film workers'. Quoted in Horníček, J. (2000), p. 111.
66. Report by *Státní bezpečnost* (State Security), 11 June 1951, Archiv bezpečnostních složek, file 23678.
67. This was a source of tensions among Reich Germans, such as Karl Schulz, the *Treuhänder* for Barrandov Studios and later *Prag-Film* director. According to an SD report, Schulz mentioned '*sudetendeutsche Arschlocher*' (Sudeten German assholes) complicating his work at Barrandov. Schulz's career ended in December 1942 when he was arrested and sentenced for black marketeering. See Bednařík, P. (2003), p. 89.
68. For an analysis of 1945 as a moment when the pre-existing cohesiveness of society and the legitimacy of its foundations were submitted to a substantial revision, see Rákosník, J. & Spurný, M. & Štaif, J. (2018) *Milníky moderních českých dějin. Krize konsenzu a legitimity v letech 1848–1989.* Praha: Argo, pp. 167–210.
69. Ibid., p. 199.
70. A letter from Miloš Havel to Václav Kopecký, 9 July 1945, in Havel, V.M. (2018), p. 158.

CHAPTER 7

In the Sound of Time: The Fate of Ukrainian Inventor Ivan Nikitin

Tatiana Manykina

Professor Ivan Nikitin (1896–1969) dedicated his professional life to sound recording for the cinema industry. During the German occupation of Ukraine (1941–1944), Nikitin worked in a leading position at the *Kyiv Film Studio*, led by the German organization *Ukraine-Film GmbH*. The Germans appreciated him as an employee and treated him as an equal. After the war, Nikitin was sentenced by a Soviet court to ten years in the Gulag, yet even in prison he was allowed to work in his area of specialization. Throughout his imprisonment and until the end of his life, Nikitin wrote petitions for clemency to the Soviet authorities.

The present chapter draws primarily on archival sources relating to the post-war court cases, most importantly the 428-page documentation of Nikitin's trial from the archives of the *Security Service of Ukraine,* which was declassified only in 2011.[1] Ivan Nikitin was put on trial in Kyiv in 1946 under Article 54 1-a of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic[2] and was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment.

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P. Skopal, R. Vande Winkel (eds.), *Film Professionals in Nazi-Occupied Europe*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61634-2_7

Additional information was taken from the court files (including transcripts of interrogations) of former Ukrainian employees of the German firm *Ukraine-Film GmbH*. At the outset, it is necessary to acknowledge the peculiar status of judicial files as historical source materials and to keep in mind that defendants are inclined to keep silent about certain information or to attempt to protect themselves by telling lies or half-truths.[3] In addition, given the working methods of Soviet investigators, especially during the period of the Stalin regime, it is impossible to accept at face value everything stated by the accused or attributed to them during interrogations. One should also take into account the specific language of Soviet documents of the post-war period, employing peculiar words and template phrases of that time. Despite such peculiarities, these judicial sources are still highly valuable for the unique information they provide about the duties of Nikitin at *Ukraine-Film GmbH*. Further information regarding Nikitin was found in the documentation of the city administration and in the *Ukraine-Film* files at the Kyiv Region State Archive. In addition, Nikitin's granddaughters, Margarita Nikitina and Varvara Kluth, managed to preserve extensive family archives containing personal letters as well as Nikitin's notes and papers.

Ukrainian Film Facilities Under Occupation

Kyiv Film Studio was founded in 1925[4] and had great cultural significance not only for Ukraine, but for the entire USSR as well. The studio was comprised of several filming pavilions spread over a vast area of nearly sixteen hectares, which were in constant operation. By June 1941, the *Film Studio* had released dozens feature films. In advance of the German invasion of Ukraine in the summer of 1941, in September 1941 the *Kyiv Film Studio* and the most of its interior studio equipment were hastily evacuated to Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

After the capture of Ukraine by German troops, millions of citizens found themselves in occupied territory. The local Soviet regime, which had brought Ukraine much suffering, had fallen, but the arrival of a new government did not mean the beginning of a new happy life. In July 1941, Hitler decreed that most of German-occupied Ukraine would be ruled by the *Reichskommissariat Ukraine*, a civil administration governed by Alfred Rosenberg's *Reichsministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete* (Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories). The head of this civil administration was *Reichskommissar* Erich Koch. Under this regime, the country known

for its fertile lands was used as a raw material base, and its citizens exploited as cheap labourers. At the beginning of the occupation the Germans and their accomplices initiated the mass extermination of the Ukranian Jewish population. Any resistance to the new regime was suppressed. German propagandists used the press, radio communications, and cinema networks to target the local population.

On 10 November 1941, the *Zentralfilmgesellschaft Ost (ZFO)* was established in Berlin (Fig. 7.1).[5] It was created to 'adopt the entire cinema system in the post-Soviet territories and use it as a propaganda tool in the interests of the Reich'.[6] It consisted of two working subsidiaries: *Ostland-Film GmbH* in Riga (the capital of German-occupied Latvia) and *Ukraine-Film GmbH* in Kyiv—there were plans to expand the company, but it did not come to that. Until the German troops retreated from Kyiv in the autumn of 1943, *Ukraine-Film* supplied movies to cinemas for both German soldiers and local civilians. The company also used the abandoned *Kyiv Film Studio* to produce propaganda movies. Many former employees of the *Kyiv Film Studio* had not relocated to Turkmenistan and instead continued or resumed their work, now under the auspices of the German occupiers. The number of operational staff members employed in the main office, in the studio, and in the movie theatres belonging to the Kyiv subsidiary of *Ukraine-Film* exceeded 500 local workers (German employees who came to Ukraine for work are not included in this number).[7] After the defeat of Nazi Germany, some of these Soviet citizens were put on trial for having worked for *Ukraine-Film*, or were asked to serve as witnesses. All of these people were ordinary operational staff, who were not involved in the decisions made by the Germans who occupied most key positions at *Ukraine-Film*. However, one exception to this rule was Professor Ivan Nikitin, a genius of sound recording who was one of the leading figures within *Ukraine-Film*.

Already during the time of the occupation, Ivan Nikitin was marked as a traitor and collaborator in a partisan report on the situation in occupied Kyiv: 'The Film Management Department is headed by Nikitin. It started its work collecting left-behind film projectors and sending them to Germany, which was experiencing an acute shortage of the devices. (…) Since early 1942, the Film Management Department became a part of the fascist authority. After repairing a few remaining broken film projectors, they opened some movie theatres for the Kyiv public'.[8] Nikitin's name was mentioned once again in the section of the report entitled 'Leaders of the Nationalist movement and other active fascist collaborators': 'Nikitin, a

Fig. 7.1 Stamp with the logo of the *Zentralfilmgesellschaft Ost (ZFO)* in the centre and the name of the subsidiary studio *Ukraine-Film GmbH* (Kyiv) in a circle around it. (The William Gillespie Collection, Sydney (https://german-films.net/))

film equipment engineer and a professor at the *Kyiv Film Institute*, earned the attention of the *Führer* for his fascist activity and was rewarded with the highest award – the Cross for the Occupied Peoples. This scoundrel collected all of the innovations and inventions of the Soviet research institutes and the latest advances in photoshooting and sold them to the German fascists'.[9] This report alone would have been enough to qualify Nikitin for the most brutal punishment after being caught by the Soviets. Of course, though, things were not so straightforward. But who actually was Nikitin and what was his role during the Nazi occupation?

From the Very Beginning to the Pinnacle of His Career

Ivan Ivanovich Nikitin was born on 29 November 1896 in Rodzivilov (today Radivilov) in the Rovno region of Ukraine. Nikitin descended from the nobility—his grandmother was German (née von Blum), his mother had German and Lithuanian ancestors, while his father was Russian. Attending the *Kyiv Gymnasium* provided him the opportunity to learn German and English very well. Following the Bolshevik revolution, Nikitin had to hide his noble roots: his (unpublished) pre-war short autobiography states that he was born into a family of 'railway employee'.[10] While studying at *Kyiv Polytechnic Institute*, Nikitin married Pelageya Masychenko (born 1889). They had two children: a daughter, Ksenia (born 1920), and a son, Andrey (born 1927). Prior to 1931, Nikitin worked in Mironovka township in the Kyiv region as the head of a workshop, where he developed a number of radio receivers. In 1931, the family moved to Kyiv. There Nikitin occupied a position as the head of the scientific research laboratory at the *Kyiv Film Studio*, where he was responsible for inventions in film technology.

From the very start, Nikitin was in charge of operations in the sound mixing department, which was at the time engaged in the transition from silent to sound films (Fig. 7.2). Due to a shortage of film equipment, he had to develop and invent new devices. According to his autobiography, he invented sound measuring and sound recording devices, some of which were employed in all cinema studios of the Soviet Union.[11] Prior to 1941, a list of devices invented by Nikitin was created, which has been preserved by his family; the list features sixteen primary inventions, which are mostly related to sound mixing in film production.[12]

In 1932, Nikitin started teaching at the *Kyiv Institute of Film Engineers*.[13] The *Film Studio* awarded him several certificates of honour for his inventions, including the state's most important certificate for his contribution to the Soviet film industry which was signed by Mikhail Kalinin, the Chairman of the *USSR Central Executive Committee*,[14] and awarded to Nikitin in the Moscow Kremlin. In 1937, Nikitin visited the United States and the United Kingdom on an extended business trip with a group of other Soviet engineers.

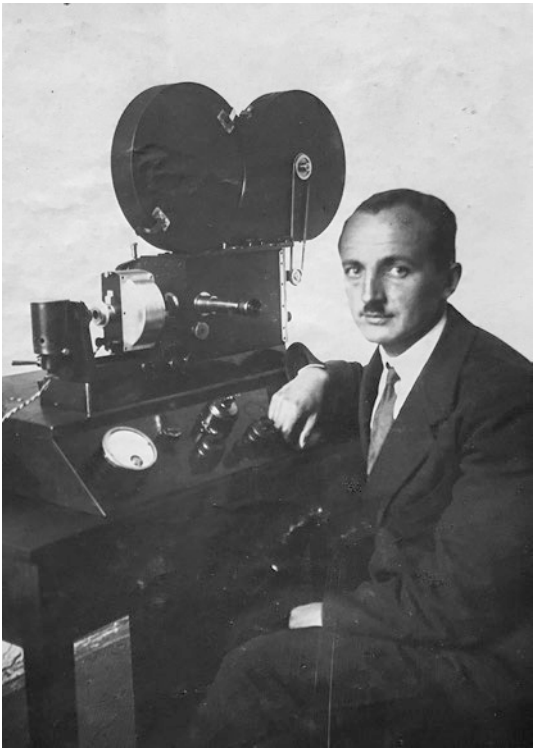

Fig. 7.2 Ivan Nikitin in 1934 as the head of the scientific research laboratory at the Kyiv Film Studio. (Nikitin Family Archive)

An Internship in America

Nikitin spent a total of about six months in the United States studying the latest inventions designed by his American colleagues. At his request, he was sent to Hollywood on his own—separate from the group—to complete a one-and-a-half month internship at the *20th Century Fox* film studios.[15] He also independently visited, the *World Congress of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers* in New York, where he attended many lectures on various topics related to the cinema. On his way back to the USSR, Nikitin travelled to England for about a month to explore innovations in filmmaking there.[16] He wrote in his autobiography that 'this research of film equipment enabled me to offer a variety of solutions to the Soviet film equipment industry and technological work improvements. I submitted hundreds of technical drawings and engineering design guidelines to the

factory and the studios'.[17] Following this long trip, Nikitin returned to Kyiv, where he continued working at the *Film Studio*'s sound lab and at the *Institute of Film Engineers*. In June 1939, Nikitin was granted the title of Professor of Cinematography in the Department of Mixing and Sound Reproduction.[18]

In a 1946 letter to *Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del* (The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, NKVD), Soviet scientist Grigory Irsky, who was the head of the technical department of the USSR's Committee on Cinematography in Moscow, wrote a negative assessment of Nikitin, describing his behaviour as 'imitating an irreplaceable expert.' Speaking of his own trip to the USA in 1941, Irsky said that he had met with his American colleagues, who remembered Nikitin and stated that he had made a very good impression on them (which, given the Soviet reality of the period, also portrayed Nikitin in a decidedly negative light).[19] In fact, such international internships of Soviet engineers often ended in tragedy. Some people were arrested shortly after their return from scientific business trips to the United States, such as shipbuilder Valerian Brzezinski, who had visited America—just like Nikitin—from January to November 1937. Likewise, aircraft designer Andrei Tupolev was arrested a few months after his return from a scientific business trip to the United States in 1937. Nikitin had the good fortune to avoid this fate. But he could not have been unaware that he was entering a minefield upon his return—just his having numerous business connections abroad would have been enough to get him arrested.

The Time of German Occupation

In June 1941, Nikitin was in Leningrad. As the head of the examination commission at the *Leningrad Institute of Film Engineers*, he administered students' final exams from June 7 to 21.[20] One day after this, on June 22, Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union; war had broken out and Nikitin went to be with his family in Kyiv. As a Professor at the Kyiv Institute of Film Engineers, he was excused from mobilization for three months.[21] In September 1941, the speedy evacuation of the *Kyiv Film Studio* to Ashkhabad was organized, for which Nikitin supervised the shipment of the studio's equipment. The *Film Institute* where Nikitin also worked was not evacuated, and most of the *Film Studio*'s operational staff remained in occupied Kyiv.[22] Around 400,000 inhabitants were still in the city when the German troops arrived.

What did the fall of Soviet power mean for Nikitin? The post-war investigation includes testimony made by Nikitin's son, Andrey, after his arrest. Andrey Nikitin testified that, after the German-Soviet war broke out, but before the Germans invaded Kyiv, his father said that 'he would try to get personal possession of one of the movie theatres in Kyiv, employ the whole family there and get good money from it'.[23] Ivan Nikitin did not deny these words, but claimed that they were merely 'a joke'.[24] But perhaps this was not a joke, and the Nikitin family deliberately stayed in Kyiv hoping for just such a life under the new government? Nikitin certainly had his motivations to stay in Kyiv. Immediately after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, many 'politically unreliable' people were hastily arrested in Soviet territories not yet occupied by the Germans. At that time, the police had come to his house in Kyiv with an arrest warrant, but Nikitin was lucky as he was not at home, since he was still in Leningrad.[25]

The German troops invaded Kyiv on 19 September 1941. Shortly afterwards, in October, Nikitin declared himself and his family to be *Volksdeutsche*[26]—a Nazi term denoting people of German ethnic origin but living outside of Germany and lacking German citizenship. After this, the living conditions of his family significantly improved. They were entitled to extra rations, allowed to listen to radio broadcasts and visit theatres, and were guaranteed the security of their house.[27]

In the autumn of 1941, the local Kyiv government established an Art Department within the city administration under the control of the Nazis. Ivan Kavaleridze, a famous Ukrainian sculptor and film director, was appointed as the head of the Art Department. Nikitin joined the Art Department as the head of the Film Sector. By November 1941, he was already inspecting movie theatres to ensure their operational readiness. However, due to electricity shortages, Kyiv's movie theatres, even though they were operation-ready, did not re-open until the beginning of January 1942.[28]

In November 1941, a German officer named Lauer, a representative of the German soldiers' film department, paid a visit to the Art Department in order to inspect the Soviet film equipment that had remained in Kyiv (Fig. 7.3).[29] He also went to the *Kyiv Film Studio*, accompanied by Nikitin, to select rolls of Soviet movies to be sent to Germany.[30] Then, in December 1941, the German company *Ukraine-Film GmbH* shifted to Ukraine. According to a decree from 8.12.1941 by Erich Koch, *Reichskomissar* of Ukraine,[31] *Ukraine-Film* was to take possession of all the movie theatres and film studios in the territory of the *Reichskommissariat Ukraine*.[32]

24. Jahrgang — Nummer 281
Einzelpreis 15 Pfg.

AusgabeT

Film-Kurier

Das führende deutsche Fachblatt
Vereinigt mit Licht-Bild-Bühne
Beilagen: Illustrierter Film-Kurier · Kinotechnische Rundschau · Bilderbogen

TAGESZEITUNG

Berlin, Montag, 30. November 1942

Der Film in den besetzten Ostgebieten

Ein Jahr Ukraine-Filmgesellschaft

Die Ukraine-Filmgesellschaft m. b. H., Kiew, ein Tochterunternehmen der Zentralfilmgesellschaft Ost m. b. H., kann auf ihr einjähriges Bestehen zurückblicken.

Die Gesellschaft ist mit der Organisation und Führung der gesamten Filmwirtschaft des Reichskommissariats Ukraine betraut. In dem Ergebnis der einjährigen Aufbauarbeit der Ukraine-Filmgesellschaft m. b. H. kommt die gewaltige Arbeit zum Ausdruck, die von den mit der Uebernahme des bolschewistischen Erbes beauftragten Kräften geleistet werden mußte.

Wie auf allen Gebieten der Verwaltung und Wirtschaft hatten die Sowjets auch auf dem des Filmwesens große Zerstörungen angerichtet und ein Trümmerfeld hinterlassen. Die Lichtspielhäuser befanden sich, soweit sie nicht vollständig zerstört waren, in unwürdigem Zustand, die Apparaturen mußten ergänzt oder neubeschafft werden. Vor allem galt es, an die Stelle der sowjetischen Hetz- und Propagandafilme wertvolle deutsche Filme einzusetzen. Daher ging Hand in Hand mit der Instandsetzung der Lichtspielhäuser und der Ergänzung und Beschaffung der Apparaturen der Aufbau der Verwaltung.

Die Ukraine-Film, die unter der Leitung von Dr. Will steht, schuf sich innerhalb kürzester Zeit ein Verteilungsnetz für ihre Verleih-Organisation, das es zum Beispiel ermöglicht, die neueste Wochenschau wenige Tage nach dem ersten Anlaufen im Reich auch in der Ukraine an allen wichtigen Orten vorzuführen.

Zweigstellen der Ukraine-Film-G. m. b. H. wurden am Sitze jedes Generalkommissars errichtet, d. h. in Kiew, Shitomir, Luzk, Dnjepropetrowsk, Nikolajew und Melitopol. Am Sitz des Reichskommissars ist die Gesellschaft durch ihre Leitstelle Rowno vertreten. Nebenstellen befinden sich in Saporoshje, Lemberg, Kriwoirog, Poltawa, Winnica und Prokurow.

Hierdurch ist der Filmeinsatz auch in entlegenen Gebieten möglich geworden, so daß jetzt etwa 300 ortsfeste Lichtspieltheater in Betrieb sind, wozu eine ganze Reihe sogenannter Mitgliedstellen hinzukommt.

Die Tätigkeit der Ukraine-Filmgesellschaft m. b. H. verbindet die im Reichskommissariat Ukraine eingesetzten Reichsdeutschen durch die Deutsche Wochenschau und die Vorführung bester deutscher Filme mit der Heimat und bringt der einheimischen Bevölkerung durch den Einsatz der in der Landessprache untertitelten Wochenschau und synchronisierter Spielfilme ein Bild deutscher Macht und deutscher Arbeit. Darüber hinaus ist der Film im Reichskommissariat Ukraine für die Truppenbetreuung eingesetzt. Zur Zeit sind die Vorbereitungen im Gange, die technischen Voraussetzungen für die Errichtung eines eigenen Produktionsbetriebes in Kiew zu schaffen.

Es besteben heute bereits im Großen Studio in Kiew eine Kopieranstalt sowie umfangreiche Reparaturwerkstätten. Die Ukraine-Filmgesellschaft verfügt über einen Park von Schmalfilmeinsatzwagen, die in den Orten eingesetzt wer-

Neuer Bavaria-Film
„Die schwache Stunde"

In Prag begannen die Aufnahmen zu dem Bavaria-Film „Die schwache Stunde". Das Drehbuch schrieb Felix v. Eckardt nach dem gleichnamigen Theaterstück von Harald Röhbeling. Unter der Produktionsleitung von Ernst Reichenmacher führt Otto Fittenmann die Regie mit Hannelore Schroth, Hilde v. Stolz, Charlott Daudert, Paul Richter, Walter Janssen, Fritz Odemar und Josef Eichheim in den Hauptrollen. Musik: Leo Leux.

Drehschluß „Liebe, Leidenschaft und Leid"

Die Prag-Film beendete die Aufnahmen zu dem Film „Liebe, Leidenschaft und Leid", dessen Drehbuch Kurt Heuser schrieb. Unter der Spielleitung von J. A. Hofmann wirkten mit: Karin Hardt, Hilde Sessak, Margit Symo, Margarete Hagen, Heinze Helff, Waldemar Leitgeb, Rich. Häußler, Josef Sieber, Adolf Fischer, Wilhelm H. Kinig, Josef Kamper, Artur Reinhardt, Pohl u. a. An der Kamera stand Karl Degl, die Bauten erstellten Johann Zark und Gottlieb Hersch. Die Musik schuf Georg Sirsker. Die Produktionsleitung lag in Händen von Walter Zeicke. Der Film beendigt sich bereits im Schnitt.

Aufnahmen zu „Damals" beendet

Rossano Brazzi zu den Schlußaufnahmen in Berlin

In Babelsberg wurden die Aufnahmen zu und den Rolf Hansen mit Zarah Leander in der Hauptrolle inszeniert, beendet.

Für die Schlußaufnahmen hielt sich in diesen Tagen der bekannte italienische Liebhaberdarsteller Rossano Brazzi als Partner der Hauptdarstellerin in Berlin auf.

Wochenschau-Theater in Posen eröffnet

E. P. Posen, 28. November. Vor geladenen Gästen, unter denen man viele maßgebliche Vertreter von Partei und Staat sah, wurde am Freitag vormittag in Posen das neue Wochenschaukino eröffnet. Das 200 Plätze aufweisende Theater, das bisher ein Tageskino war, eignet sich für den neuen Zweck außerordentlich gut, da es im Zentrum der Stadt und an der belebtesten Straße Posens liegt, die von jedem auswärtigen Besucher aufgesucht wird. Diese günstige Lage und das gefällige Innere werden stark dazu beitragen, den neuen in den Wochenschau-Kinos begründeten Gedanken zu fördern.

Der Vertreter des Landeskulturwalters schilderte Sinn und Zweck dieser neuen Einrichtung, denn sich Posen neben wenigen Städten des Reiches rühmen könne. Sie sei aus dem Bedürfnis der Anteilnahme am Zeitgeschehen heraus entstanden.

Das interessant und vielgestaltig zusammengestellte Programm fand bei den Zuschauern restlose Anerkennung. Es setzte sich aus dem Kulturfilm „Hongkong", dem Sonderbericht der Scala-Revue, Ausschnitten aus den ausländischen Wochenschauen und der Deutschen Wochenschau zusammen. Der erste Tag war vielversprechend, so daß da-

Zensiert

Der Tobis-Film „Symphonie eines Lebens" wurde von der Filmprüfstelle unter Jugendverbot freigegeben. Er ist feiertagsfrei.

*

Der Film „Maskerade" (Hersteller: NFK-Film), Verleih: Märkische Panorama-Schneider-Südost) wurde unter Jugendverbot zensiert.

*

Die deutschsprachige Fassung des Continental-Films „Einmal im Jahr", der im Deutschen Filmvertrieb erscheint, wurde für Jugendliche vom vollendeten 14. Lebensjahr ab zugelassen. Die Originalfassung mit einkopierten deutschen Titeln ist für Jugendliche verboten.

EIN WIEN-FILM
Die heimliche Gräfin
IN DEN ERSTEN 31 TAGEN
43 341
BESUCHER
Spitzenergebnis!
UNION-THEATER, Graz
(483 Plätze)
WIEN-FILM

EIN UFA-FILM
GPU
„Große, mitunter überraschende Montagen, rasante Schnitte und die das Markante einer jeden Figur herausarbeitende Kameraeinstellungen fesseln vom ersten bis zum letzten Bild und geben dem Ganzen ein atemberaubendes Tempo ..."
DER FILM
UFA

EIN TOBIS-FILM
Der große Schatten
IN DEN ERSTEN 10 TAGEN
32 107
BESUCHER
HAUSREKORD!
ALHAMBRA
(1010 Plätze)
Königsberg i. Pr.

EIN TERRA-FILM
FRONTTHEATER
„Ein packender Gegenwartsfilm ..."
Fränkische Tageszeitung Nürnberg

Fig. 7.3 "Cinema in the occupied eastern territories. One Year of the *Ukraine-Film GmbH*". This frontpage of the German daily *Filmkurier* from November 1942 describes the 'restoration works' carried out by the company, to ensure that Ukrainian cinemas are operating and screening German films and newsreels for the local population. The article also talks about plans to make films in the Crimea in the foreseeable future. (The William Gillespie Collection, Sydney (https://germanfilms.net/)).

A German named Dr. Will was the company director and a man named Ullner was the head of the Technical Department.[33] Allegedly, these two men approached Nikitin, said that they know him to be a remarkable film-making expert and offered him a job at *Ukraine-Film*.[34] Soon after this meeting, the occupation-era newspaper *New Ukrainian Word* wrote that Professor Nikitin and two associate professors of the *Kyiv Film Institute* had been given an honorary award[35] from the Propaganda Ministry in Berlin.[36] The same information also appeared in the newspaper *The Latest News* in January 1942 with a photo of Nikitin taken in the laboratory next to a sound recording device that he had invented.[37] After the war, these publications were presented in Nikitin's investigation as evidence of his intensive collaboration with the Germans.[38]

As deputy head of Technical Department of *Ukraine-Film*, Nikitin's responsibilities also included working with movie theatres. He 'would determine what parts are missing in the Soviet equipment and replace them with repair parts from German equipment and materials, looking for ways to restore and configure the projection equipment in all movie theatres'.[39] For his superiors, Nikitin 'made reports in German on the condition of movie theatres and potential solutions to technical problems'.[40]

On 3 February 1942, Nikitin was sent on a business trip to Germany[41] for two weeks. Nikitin travelled with Gutenberger, the German director of the Dnipropetrovsk *Zweigstelle* (regional subsidiary) of *Ukraine-Film*. During his stay in Berlin, Nikitin was introduced to the head of *ZFO,* Mr. Müller-Beckedorf, and the head of its Technical Department, Mr. Zelle.[42] Nikitin also visited the buildings of the film companies *Tobis* and *Ufa* and spent time at five major Berlin movie theatres, where he became familiar with all of their technical nuances.[43]

Back in Kyiv, Nikitin continued his work at *Ukraine-Film*. Once the city's movie theatres had begun to operate satisfactorily, Nikitin began the process of upgrading specific areas of the *Film Studio*.[44] In the spring of 1942 the executive management of *Ukraine-Film* decided to open a *Film Studio* in Kyiv. The idea behind the studio was to produce propaganda movies for the people of the occupied USSR locally, rather than spending money to produce them in Germany. Nikitin was also employed at the *Film Studio* as a technical consultant.[45] He had access to a sound laboratory there outfitted with facilities for sound measurement and sound control, a sound recording studio, a voice recording room, a projection room, and a technical office.[46] His 'N-7' invention was installed in the sound recording studio and was later used to record voice-overs for movies and

German newsreels such as *Deutsche Wochenschau*.[47] In addition to this work on the laboratory, Nikitin and his colleagues, outfitted a special screening room at the main office of *Ukraine-Film* for the purpose of viewing movies from Germany.[48] Nikitin also developed a manual on 'technical sound and image control'[49] and wrote an instruction book for 'the maintenance of Soviet cinema equipment' which was translated into German and sent to all the branches (*Zweigstellen*) of *Ukraine-Film*.[50]

Due to the coordinated work of the *Zweigstellen*, new cinemas were constantly opened throughout the *Reichskommissariat Ukraine*. Over the course of *Ukraine-Film's* existence, from November 1941 until the beginning of 1943, 314 movie theatres were opened in Ukraine.[51] An important role in organizing this process was played by the Technical Department of *Ukraine-Film*, which supplied cinemas with equipment. The key persons in the Technical Department were the German head of the Engineering Department Langguth and his deputy, Nikitin.[52] Witness Tatyana Chernyshova, a former employee at *Film Studio*, testified that almost every day, Nikitin would come from the company office to the *Film Studio* to give instructions.[53] Indeed, the German management communicated instructions to the Russian-speaking employees through Nikitin, on account of his authority, his status of *Volksdeutscher* and, last but not least, his command of the German language.

At the end of 1942, Nikitin returned to Berlin on another business trip. According to his account, he met a man there named Riede, 'a prominent representative of the German state administration of the film industry', who expressed interest in using the Kyiv *Film Studio* to produce German movies.[54] Nikitin took his children on this trip. His son Andrei, who was fifteen years old at the time, attended German school in Winckettsdorf in January 1943 and joined the ranks of the *Hitlerjugend* (Hitler Youth) organization as a German schoolboy.[55] His daughter, Ksenia Nikitina-Korovko, who was employed in Kyiv at *Ukraine-Film* as a typist,[56] recalled visiting the home of one of her father's German colleagues in Berlin, where she saw some 'newsreels made by *Ukraine-Film* with father's assistance: *Kyiv* and *Vosstanovlenie Ukrainfilma* (Restoring Ukraine-Film, 1943). The latter film cited [her] father as a researcher who directly participated in this restoration'.[57] *Restoring Ukraine-Film* or, as witnesses named it at the investigation '*The Revival of Ukraine-Film*' or '*The Founding of Ukraine-Film*', had the propagandistic message that the Bolsheviks took all the equipment from the Film Studio during their retreat and 'destroyed' them (which was, in fact, not true), but then the

Germans arrived in Ukraine and restored the movie production industry in Ukraine.

No full-length, feature movies were shot in Ukraine during the German occupation, however several short pseudo-documentary propaganda movies, so-called *Kulturfilme*, were produced. These *Kulturfilme* are also mentioned in a report cited by film historian Hans-Joachim Schlegel, which tells of a decision made between separate responsible German ministries on 22 October 1942, 'not to produce full-length feature films', but 'only to produce propaganda and educational films in Ukrainian in a studio in Kyiv'. It also states that 'in the fiscal year 1942/43, an educational film about the tobacco industry was released, as well as a cultural film about the city of Kyiv'.[58]

The *Kulturfilm* titled *Kyiv* (1943) was, in fact, not very 'cultural' at all. The idea of this short movie was to show the destroyed parts of Kyiv, namely the places demolished by the Bolsheviks during their retreat from Kiev. These images were accompanied by a propagandistic text intoned in voice-over by a narrator. The Ukrainian cameraman Nikolay Topchiy, who took part in filming the movie, also shot *Restoring Ukraine-Film*. According to Topchiy, *Restoring Ukraine-Film* was supposed to include shots of the boss himself, Dr. Will, at work, reading the newspaper, at lunch, and in the circle of people close to him, such as Ullner and other leading individuals (and including, according to Ksenia, Nikitin as well). Topchiy added that the filming process was hampered by the fact that it could only be done when Dr. Will, Ullner, and others were in the mood to shoot.[59] In her recollections of *Restoring Ukraine-Film*, witness Tatiana Chernyshova claimed that it 'displays a tendency to show the process of the studio's renewal performed by the [German] liberators after it had been nearly destroyed at the hands of the Soviets under the Bolshevik oppression of the people, and that the German liberators were directly involved in creative work, despite all of the difficulties, hard work, and deprivation'.[60]

As for the other movies produced at *Ukraine-Film* during the period of Occupation, Nikitin featured: *Stralo*, about a brand of German trucks, whose garage was in one of the pavilions of the *Film Studio*; *Tabak* (Tobacco, 1943), about growing tobacco in Ukraine; and *Den' na Ukraine* (A Day in Ukraine, 1943), about the country's fertile lands.[61] According to the testimony of radio mechanic Ivan Potapenko, the studio did audio dubbing for newsreel items such as *Pokhorony zhertv bol'shevistskogo terrora v Vinnitse* (The Funeral of the Victims of the Bolshevik Terror in Vinnitsa,

1943), *Priezd Rosenberga v Kyiv* (The Arrival of Rosenberg in Kyiv, 1942), *Peredacha zemli v polzovanie krest'yanam sela Belichi* (The Transfer of Land to the Villagers of Belichi, 1943), and *'Zanyatiya v shkole dlya Volksdeutsche* (Classes at the School for Volksdeutsche, 1943).[62] Ivan Potapenko also stated that in 1942, the sound studio 'recorded the performance of a Ukrainian choir under the direction of Goncharov'.[63] We can surmise that this refers to a recording for the propaganda movie, *Mi edem v Germaniu/Wir fahren nach Deutschland* (We Are Going to Germany, 1943) whose final scene presents a concert in a German camp for forced labourers from the Soviet Union.[64] During the post-war investigation, some of the preserved film reels were shown to Nikitin, and based on the quality of the reproduced audio recording, Nikitin had to agree that the audio was recorded and in his laboratory with his recording device.[65]

The so-called German 'restoration' of *Ukraine-Film* was realized in 1943 when the *Film Studio* again reached the minimum conditions for filming. This new period did not last long, however—only until the autumn of 1943, when *Ukraine-Film* and the huge part of the equipment from the *Film Studio* and Ukrainian cinemas were hastily relocated from Kyiv to Germany. Nevertheless, the film propaganda work carried out by the Nazis in occupied Ukraine would not have yielded such impressive results in a short period of time without the assistance of local professionals such as Ivan Nikitin.

The Other Side of Nikitin

According to the testimonies of witnesses and defendants in the case of the *Kyiv Film Studio,* Nikitin, in addition to being an effective professional, was also willing to lend a helping hand to people in danger. In his 1956 petition for rehabilitation, written after being released from the Gulag in 1955, Nikitin repeated a story he had told during his interrogations. He claimed that he provided shelter to a Jewish woman named Olga Aronovna Malyovannaya for two weeks at the time of the infamous massacre of Kyiv Jews in Babi Yar at the end of September 1941 (which cost the lives of more than 33,000 Jews) consequently saving her life.[66] In 1946, however, the Soviet investigators did not consider this fact to be important, and Malyovannaya was not summoned as a witness.[67]

In the summer of 1942, the administrative director of *Ukraine-Film*, Konstantin Stanishevsky, was arrested by the Nazis. He was ultimately

released thanks to Nikitin, who provided a statement that Stanishevsky was indispensable to the studio.[68] Nikitin provided dozens of such documents throughout the occupation, thereby saving the lives of numerous camp and prison inmates.[69] Some of the people who were saved by Nikitin confirmed this during their interrogations.

Certain 'workers' at the *Film Studio* were employed under completely false pretences and effectively performed no work whatsoever. Having a job saved them from being taken away for forced labour in Germany. Stanishevsky and Nikitin also provided a letter of guarantee to a Jewish former makeup artist, Leonid Khazanov stating that he was not a Jew, but rather of the Orthodox faith, and Stanishevsky even supplied his own birth certificate to Khazanov to be used as 'proof'.[70] This story was confirmed in the testimony of Leonid Khazanov's wife, Vera Khazanova.[71]

Back to the Roots: Escape to Germany

In September 1943, as Soviet forces were closing in on Kyiv, *Ukraine-Film* was hurriedly evacuated to Germany. As a result, some Soviet citizens and *Film Studio* equipment were shipped out. Among the *Ukraine-Film* employees who left with the Germans were Nikitin and his family. According to witness Alexei Preobrazhensky, before leaving for Germany, 'Nikitin convened an (illegal) meeting, where he said that the Germans were defeated and that the Bolsheviks would be in Kyiv very soon. Moreover, he said that he was very reluctantly going to Germany as a result of conditions set for him by the Germans'.[72] Witness Tatyana Chernyshova also stated in her interrogation that she heard *Film Studio* employees saying that Nikitin did not want to leave with the Germans.[73]

In 1956, Nikitin stated that he left with the Germans because he had been warned by his former German boss, 'the ardent anti-fascist Bielicke', that if he didn't go to Germany, he would be shot.[74] Witness Pyotr Kashevsky also testified in court that before his departure, Nikitin said to him: 'They're calling me back from vacation and threatening with repressions. I have to leave, but I hope to come back home at the end of the war'.[75] He then added that 'upon leaving Kyiv, Nikitin gave me his extremely valuable device, his own invention, which he asked me to give to the *Soviet Film Studio* for use when the Red Army came'.[76] In a draft of a letter to the General Prosecutor of the USSR, Nikitin notes that besides this "N-7"-sound recording device, laboratory workers under Nikitin's direction hid an array of other valuable equipment, which saved them

from being taken to Germany.[77] Konstantin Stanishevsky's memoirs mention another interesting fact: when departing Kyiv along with the Germans, Nikitin gave to Stanishevsky letters for Nikita Khrushchev, who was then the First Secretary of the Ukrainian Central Committee's VKP(b), and for film director Aleksander Dovzhenko.[78]

In Germany, Nikitin and his family headed to Königshütte in the Harz region, where the subsidiary of *Ukraine-Film* was relocated. According to Nikitin, the studio initially retained its original name, but was then renamed—in fact, it had been integrated into Tobis two months before the American troops entered the city.[79] Before the arrival of the US army, Nikitin was in charge of the repair shop for film projectors loudspeaker equipment, where he had five people working under his supervision[80] During this period, Nikitin 'inspected the equipment of *Ukraine-Film* and repaired it with [his] co-workers. This time it was intended for the setup of movie theatres in Germany'.[81] It would seem that 'Ukraine-Film' in Königshütte was a big company. According to Nikitin's statement, there were about eighty-five employees from the Soviet Union alone.[82] According to the monthly report of the head of ZFO, Dr. Muller-Beckorff, from 25 January 1945, 'new Ukrainian skilled workers from Slovakia' were added to the 'old' workers.[83]

When Königshütte was transferred to the Soviet occupation zone, 'seventy people [Soviet citizens] fled to the American and the British Zones of Occupation as active German collaborators, while six people showed their willingness to return to the Motherland'.[84] Ivan Nikitin was one of those six. In his interrogation he claimed that he stayed behind to rescue the Soviet film equipment and transfer them to the proper authorities.[85] It is worth mentioning that as the American troops arrived in Königshütte, Nikitin convened a meeting where he gave a speech devoted to liberation, but not all of his colleagues enjoyed the speech, and someone shouted: 'Professor Nikitin arranges meetings celebrating liberation in order to hide his work for the Germans'.[86]

The Punishment

At the time of his arrest in December 1945, Nikitin was still in Germany. He had been working as head of the Soviet property collection team in the trophy department of the 47th Army.[87] This means that in the period from May to December 1945, he was able to assume an important position under the 'new' power, having proved his usefulness. Nikitin's first

interrogation was held in Magdeburg, Germany, and by the end of 1945, he was repatriated to the USSR. Further interrogations were held in Kyiv.

The court heard Nikitin's case on 11 July 1946. In addition to the previous weighty charges, the judge also asserted that Nikitin had been 'setting up a laboratory in the *Small Film Studio* where anti-Soviet films were produced under his guidance, and fascist films were dubbed for screening in Soviet regions temporarily occupied by the Germans'.[88] Nikitin was also accused of having contributed to the 'restoration' of the *Film Studio* and of having enrolled his son in a German gymnasium, where he entered the ranks of *Hitlerjugend*.[89] But the court also recognized that 'Nikitin partly contributed to the liberation of Soviet citizens from prisoner-of-war camps', and therefore, the tribunal found grounds to withhold extreme measures of punishment under Article 54-1a, allowing Nikitin to avoid execution.[90] He was sentenced to ten years of imprisonment and to five years of reduced rights without confiscation of property (because he did not have any).[91]

The Nikitin family—his wife, son, and daughter—were imprisoned in Kyiv from March to December 1946. Nikitin's granddaughter, Margarita, was born in prison. In December 1946, the Nikitin family was sent to a settlement in Kazakhstan for five years, but they ended up staying there much longer.[92]

In his statement, filed with the Commission on Prisoners' Affairs, Nikitin mentions that he was in the *Usollag* prison camp in Solikamsk until 1947. After that, he was transferred to Moscow and from April 1948 to December 1952, he worked at the *Marfino* special facility. This was the legendary *Marfino sharashka*, also referred to as S*pecial Prison No. 16, as well as* S*pecial Prison No. 1* (beginning in 1948), and later *The Central Scientific Research Institute for Communications*, which specialized in the design of sound equipment for the Soviet intelligence service and employed highly qualified prisoners.[93] At *Marfino*, Nikitin came up with 'a few inventions, used in devices like the Vesna and M-803 tape recorders, among others'.[94] When this facility was closed, he was transferred to *Vorkuta*.[95]

A letter to the Commission on Prisoners' Affairs dating from 1953 is the last document in Nikitin's file written by Nikitin himself (Fig. 7.4). In this letter Nikitin requests to have his sentence reduced by two years (the remainder of his term), pointing out that he worked for the benefit of the Motherland for eight years without reproach, even receiving

Fig. 7.4 Ivan Nikitin in Marfino Sharashka, Moscow, working as a highly qualified prisoner for the Soviet intelligence service, 1948. (Nikitin Family Archive)

acknowledgements for his work. Nikitin asked that the Commission take into consideration his age and disability, and concluded his letter with the following words: 'I promise to give the Motherland a whole new set of inventions in the time I have left, out of gratitude for the mercy shown to me'.[96] At that time, Nikitin was in the fifth department of *Vorkutlag*, where he worked as an engineer and timekeeper. This letter did not have its intended result and Nikitin was released from *Vorkutlag* on 28 March 1955 (after serving nine years, three months and ten days of his prison term, as the rehabilitation commission later calculated).[97] During the last two years of his prison term in *Vorkutlag*, he found time to practice his vocation: he organized and trained a group of inmates as film technicians.[98]

Life After the Gulag

After his release from *Vorkutlag*, Nikitin joined his family in Kazakhstan. He worked as a senior engineer in the technical department of the Sokolovsky-Sarbaisky mining and processing plant in Komsomolsk, Kustanai region. Nikitin had authority among his colleagues and supervised the technical training of the staff at a production plant.[99] In 1956, his wife Pelageya passed away and another one of Nikitin's requests for rehabilitation to the Chief Military Prosecutor Office was denied. The Office wrote that they had inspected his file thoroughly, but they did not find grounds to retract his sentence. The letter also added: 'regarding your good work and positive attitude toward Soviet citizens – these circumstances were taken into consideration in your sentencing'.[100]

In 1956, Nikitin was appointed as an engineer in the Manufacturing and Technology Department, and was later transferred to the *Giproruda Institute*,[101] where he became brigade foreman and deputy chief engineer of the project until his retirement in summer 1959. Later, Nikitin and his family returned to Kyiv. He went to libraries, organized a ham radio group at school, visited cinemas, and was very interested in new movies, especially foreign ones. He had articles published in academic journals and he continued to make technical drawings for new inventions until the last day of his life. Some of those, who had been rescued from camps and prisons thanks to his efforts, kept in touch with him until his final days.[102]

Nikitin stayed in touch with his former colleagues from the *Film Studio*, some of whom were still working there. In 1965, he went to the fortieth anniversary celebration of the *Film Studio*, but quickly returned home as he was not permitted to be there.[103] Nikitin had served his prison term, but this did not mean that he could automatically regain his good reputation. For many years, Nikitin sought political rehabilitation, compiling lists of people, who could provide statements about his work during the German occupation. He could not remember everyone whom he saved; he knew some people only by first name. His notebooks included the addresses and phone numbers of those people with whom he was in touch and who could testify in his favour. Until his death in 1969, Nikitin wrote letters to the prosecutor's office seeking political rehabilitation. It was not until 18 November 1991 that Ivan Nikitin was finally rehabilitated, decades after his death.[104]

Despite being rehabilitated after so many years, Ivan Nikitin's name was forever blacklisted in the history of filmmaking and radio technology.

His story does more than introduce us to an extraordinary person who had to face a number of difficult choices. It also enables us to bridge some gaps in our knowledge of the German occupation policy regarding the cinema and sheds light on the history of the *Kyiv Film Studio* and the German film politic during the occupation of Ukraine.

Notes

1. Court case of I.I. Nikitin, The State Archive Service of the Security Service of Ukraine (hereafter SSA SSU), f.6, c. 68539 FP.
2. Treason against the Motherland, which at that time was punishable by death.
3. In the case of Nikitin, however, everything he said during interrogations is confirmed by the testimonies of witnesses.
4. From 1930 to 1939 the studio was called 'Ukrainfilm'. From 1939 to 1957, it was again known as the *Kyiv Film Studio*. Since 1957, the studio has been named after the Ukrainian director Alexander Dovzhenko.
5. Ralf Forster. German Film Politics in the Occupied Eastern Territories, 1941–45, in *Cinema and the swastika*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 319.
6. From General Unit *Ostraum* to the Labor Exchange of Berlin, 13.7.1942, BArch, R55/21318, F2.
7. IDs of the film studio Ukrainian employees in Kyiv and Kyiv Region, State Archives of Kyiv Oblast (hereafter SAKO), R-2421, inventory 1, case no. 6–7.
8. 'Gaevoy' partisan report from 5.5.1943 in *Kyyiv u dni natsysts'koyi navaly: Dokumenty radyanskykh spetssluzhb: Do 60-ty rokiv vydilennya Ukrayiny vid hitlerivs'kykh zaharbnykiv: Zb. dok. ta istoriya /* compilers: T.V. Vrons'ka, A.V. Kentiy, S. A. Kokin, O.E. Lysenko, H.V. Smyrnov. – Kyiv, Lviv, 2003, p. 328.
9. Ibid., p. 330.
10. Nikitin's pre-war autobiography, undated, Nikitin family archives (hereafter Nikitin FA).
11. He states in his autobiography that he was responsible for inventing 'an oscilloscope with magnetic damping – the best type of oscilloscope in the Soviet Union to date – and … an oscilloscope thread to be supplied to all studios of the Soviet Union', as well as 'a number of sound recording devices of my system (ranging from 'N-3' to 'N-7'), which ensured top quality sound recordings in our studio and other studios for seven years, which were not inferior in quality to recordings produced with foreign-made sound equipment. I was the first to design a hydraulic speed stabilizer which later became widespread (the 'Kinap' device)' Nikitin's

pre-war autobiography, undated, Nikitin FA. The Nikitin family preserved the patents for a noise-reduction device for sound movies, an optical doubler for film reels, and a machine for the uniform film stretching of sound movies. Invention patent, dated 30.4.1933, Nikitin FA; Invention patent, dated 22.3.1941, Nikitin FA; Joint invention patent with Georgy Brilling, dated 31.1.1934, Nikitin FA.

12. List of the main research and technical publications written by the head of the sound engineering laboratory, undated, Nikitin FA.
13. Minutes from the court hearing on the case of I.I. Nikitin, dated 11.7.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 386.
14. Certificate for Nikitin's contribution to the Soviet film industry, dated 11.1.1935, Nikitin FA.
15. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin in the internal prison of the USSR, dated 25.3.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, pp. 98–99.
16. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin, dated 20.11.1945 in Magdeburg, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 10
17. Nikitin's pre-war autobiography, undated, Nikitin FA.
18. Extract from the Minutes from the Higher Attestation Commission for the Higher School under the Council of Soviet Commissars No. 28, dated 29.6.1939, Nikitin FA.
19. Letter by G.L. Irsky to NKVD, dated 12.3.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 270.
20. Letter to Prof Nikitin from the Leningrad Institute of Cinematography, dated 28.5.1941, Nikitin FA.
21. Letter to the Head of the Fifth Department of the Gorvoenpolkom from the Kyiv Institute of Cinematography under the Committee on Cinematography of the USSR, dated 31.7.1941, Nikitin FA.
22. Resolution to close appellate review of judicial acts by the supervisory instance court, dated 27.9.1956, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 413.
23. Interrogation of A.I. Nikitin in the internal prison of MSS of the USSR, dated 16.5.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 275.
24. Interrogation of I. I. Nikitin in the internal prison of MSS of the USSR, dated 22.5.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 134.
25. Interview with M.V. Nikitina (b. 1946), dated 23.4.2019 in Kyiv, author's archive, code 19-F-01.
26. Resolution to close appellate review of judicial acts by the supervisory instance court, dated 27.9.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 410.
27. The security of the house seems to have implied a lack of check-ups and police attention.
28. Complaint to the Chairman of the Supreme Court of the USSR from N. P. Topchiy, dated 24.7.1947, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 74850 FP, p. 106.

29. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin in the internal prison of MSS of the USSR, dated 14.6.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 163.
30. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin in the internal prison of MSS of the USSR, dated 15.2.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 47.
31. Preliminary Order on the Film Industry in Reichskommissariat Ukraine, signed by the *Reichskommissar* of Ukraine Gen. Koch, Rowno, 8.12.1941, SAKO, P 2356, inventory13 file 32, p. 25.
32. Interrogation of A.I. Nikitin in the internal prison of MSS of the USSR, dated 28.12.1945, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 26.
33. Ibid.
34. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin in the internal prison of MSS of the USSR, dated 14.6.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c.68539 FP, pp. 165–166.
35. During the interrogation, Nikitin and his family denied receiving the award.
36. *"Nove Ukrainske slovo" ("New Ukrainian Word")*, Kyiv, №5, 19.12.1941, p. 1.
37. *"Poslednie novosti" ("The Latest News"),* Kyiv, No. 1(3) of 2.1.1942, p. 4.
38. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin in the internal prison of MSS .of the USSR, dated 14.3.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 84.
39. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin, dated 20.11.1945 in Magdeburg, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, pp. 13–14.
40. For example: a list of closed Kyiv theaters, signed by Nikitin (undated), SAKO, F R2356, inv. 13, file 32, p. 26.
41. Order of the State City Government, dated 5.2.1942, SAKO, F R2356, inventory 13, file 2, p. 25.
42. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin in the internal prison of MSS of the USSR, dated 4.1.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 30.
43. Ibid., p. 30.
44. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin, dated 20.11.1945 in the Office of the Soviet Military Administration in Magdeburg, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 14.
45. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin in the internal prison of the USSR, dated 28.12.1945, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 27.
46. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin in the internal prison of MSS of the USSR, dated 14.6.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 175.
47. Ibid., p. 176.
48. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin in the internal prison of MSS of the USSR, 28.12.1945, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 27.
49. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin in the internal prison of the Ukrainian SSR, dated 14.6.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 172.
50. Ibid., p. 172.

51. Hans-Joachim Schlegel (2010) 'Ukraine Filmgesellschaft mbH: Nazi propaganda in occupied Ukraine' in *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* №94/95, p. 413.
52. Organizational work plan of the technical department of 23.11.1942, CDIAK of Ukraine, f. 3676, s.2, c.30a, p. 114
53. Interrogation of a witness, T. G. Chernyshova, dated 25.2.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 261.
54. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin in the internal prison of the USSR, dated 15 February 1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 49; Interrogation of I. I. Nikitin in the internal prison of the USSR, dated 15.2.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 50.
55. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin in the internal prison of the USSR, dated 15.2.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 50.
56. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin in the internal prison of the USSR, dated 2.3.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, pp. 54–55.
57. Interrogation of Ksenia Nikitina-Korovko, in the internal prison of the USSR dated 16.3.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 294.
58. Hans-Joachim Schlegel (2009). Ukraine-Filmgeselschaft MBH, in *Träume in Trümmern. Film-Produktion und Propaganda in Europa 1940–1950* (München: Edition text + kritik, 2009), p. 72.
59. Minutes from proceedings, dated 14.2.1948 on charges against N.P. Topchiy. dated 14.2.1948, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 74850 FP, pp. 159–160.
60. Minutes from the interrogation of a witness, T.G. Chernysheva, dated 20.3.1945, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 74850 FP, p. 58.
61. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin in the internal prison of the USSR, dated 15.3.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, pp. 87–88.
62. The court hearing on the case of I. I. Nikitin, dated 14.6.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, pp. 181–182. Shooting for these films dates to 1942–1943. Most of the films mentioned above have not survived. Some of the films were allegedly destroyed in the *Kyiv Film Archive* in the 1970s. The most well-known of the surviving films is *The Funeral of the Victims of the Bolshevik Terror in Vinnitsa*.
63. Minutes from the second interrogation of Ivan Potapenko, dated 16.6.1946 at the internal prison of the Ministry of State Security of the Ukrainian SSR, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 245.
64. *Mi edem v Germaniu/ Wir fahren nach Deutschland*, 1942/1943, director Eugen York, co-director George Dahlström, Germany—Ukraine-Film, 25–29 min.
65. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin, dated 18.6.1946 in the internal prison of the Ministry of State Security of the USSR, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 209–211.

66. Resolution to close appellate review of judicial acts by the supervisory instance court, dated 27.9.1956, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 417.
67. In the draft of a letter addressed to the Leninsky District Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, most likely written in the mid-1960s, Nikitin also mentioned that the Ganzmacher family—Viktor and his mother—also were hiding in his house with Malyovannaya. See the draft of Nikitin's letter to the Leninsky District Committee of the Communist Party, undated, Nikitin FA. It should be noted that the name 'Viktor Ganzmacher' (unfortunately without further details) is indicated in the list of people additionally interrogated as part of the Nikitin case in 1956, which proves that Ganzmacher survived. See: Resolution to close appellate review of judicial acts by the supervisory instance court, dated 27.9.1956, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 416.
68. Interrogation of K.V. Stanishevsky, dated 27.2.1947, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 38395 FP, p. 145.
69. Resolution to close appellate review of judicial acts by the supervisory instance court, dated 27.9.1956, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 417.
70. Khazanov was also hired by the *Film Studio* under false pretenses. The statement gave Khazanov another half a year of life, but did not ultimately save him. Based on someone's denouncement, Khazanov was arrested by Germans in June 1942 and killed. In Interrogation of K. V. Stanishevsky, dated 10.2.1947, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 38395 FP, p. 129.
71. Testimony of V.P. Khazanova, undated, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 38395 FP, p. 83.
72. Interrogation of a witness, Preobrazhensky, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 391.
73. Interrogation of a witness, Chernyshova, dated 25.2.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 262.
74. Wilhelm Bielicke, according to the testimony of Konstantin Stanishevsky, was the technical director at the studio from February 1943 until September 1943. In Stanishevsky's memoirs, appended to his court case and written after his release from the Gulag, he also calls Bielicke 'an ardent anti-fascist'. (Information from the court case of K. V. Stanishevsky, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 38395 FP p. 105); Decision to terminate the supervisory review of Ivan Nikitin's appeal, dated 27.9.1956, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 414.
75. Court proceedings on the accusation of I. I. Nikitin, dated 11.7.1946, interrogation of witness P.I. Kashevsky, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 392.
76. Ibid.
77. Letter draft of Nikitin from Ustsollag to the General Prosecutor of the USSR with a request to reconsider the case; undated; Nikitin FA.

78. Trymbach S. (2009) Kyiv cinematography during the occupation, p. 191 in *Ukraine-Germany. Cinematographic connections*, Kyiv, Globus-Press.
79. Minutes from the interrogation of I.I. Nikitin, dated 22.11.1945, at the Department of Internal Affairs of the Soviet Military Administration in the province Saxony in Magdeburg, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 19.
80. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin in the internal prison of the USSR, dated 5.3.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 63.
81. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin, dated 20.11.1945 at the Department of Internal Affairs of the Soviet Military Administration in the province Saxony in Magdeburg, SSA SSU,f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 14.
82. Minutes from the interrogation of I.I. Nikitin in the internal prison of the Ukrainian SSR, dated 18.6.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 205.
83. BArch 109/I-1662 in Hans-Joachim Schlegel. Ukraine-Filmgeselschaft MBH, in *Träume in Trümmern. Filmproduktion und Propaganda in Europa 1940–1950*, München, 2009, p. 73.
84. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin in the internal prison of the USSR, dated 18.6.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 205.
85. Ibid., p. 206.
86. Interrogation of I.I. Nikitin, dated 22.11.1945 at the Department of Internal Affairs of the Soviet Military Administration in the province Saxony in Magdeburg, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 18.
87. Opinion on the case of I.I. Nikitin, dated 18.11.1991, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p 422.
88. Sentencing on the file on charges against I.I. Nikitin, dated 11.7.1946, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 394.
89. Ibid., p. 395.
90. Ibid., p. 395.
91. Ibid., p. 394.
92. Interview with M.V. Nikitina (b. 1946), dated 23.4.2019, Kyiv, author's personal archive, interview code 19-F-01.
93. One such prisoner was the later famous writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Based on his experience here, he wrote his novel *In the First Circle*, in which he depicted life in the Marfino sharashka. Prisoners invented 'soundtypes', 'secret phones', and devices to decipher and identify the human voice.
94. Statement of Nikitin made for the Commission of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on Prisoners' Affairs in the city of Vorkuta, 17.8.1953, SSA SSU, f.6. c. 68539 FP, p. 428.
95. Ibid, p. 428.
96. Ibid, p. 428.

97. Appendix to the instruction on the period of release from prison, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 423.
98. Personal reference from the subsidiary 175/5, Vorkuta, Komi ASSR, dated 19.03.1955, Nikitin FA.
99. Decision to terminate the supervisory review of Ivan Nikitin's appeal, dated 27.9.1956, SSA SSU, f.6, c. 68539 FP, p. 417.
100. Letter to Nikitin sent by the Military Prosecutor of the Kyiv Military District, dated 1.9.1956, Nikitin FA.
101. An institute for the design of tools for mining enterprises with surface and underground mining methods
102. Interview with M.V. Nikitina (b. 1946), dated 23.04.2019 in Kyiv, author's archive, code 19-F-01.
103. Ibid.
104. Rehabilitation certificate of I.I. Nikitin, dated 19.11.1991, Nikitin FA.

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CHAPTER 8

Jan Teunissen, the Self-Proclaimed 'Film Czar' of the German-Occupied Netherlands (1940–1945)

Egbert Barten

Gerardus Johannes Teunissen was born in The Hague on 15 April 1898 and died in the same city on 24 December 1975. Between these two dates lie high summits of fame, artistic recognition, prestigious offices, and deep valleys of political malpractice, artistic frustration, and oblivion. During World War II, in the German-occupied Netherlands, Teunissen would become the 'Leader' of the Film Guild. (The word *Leider* in Dutch was written with capital 'L' to refer to the national-socialist concept of the *Führer*.) This made him the nominal head of the entire Dutch film sector. But how much power did he really have? This chapter will review Teunissen's wartime career and frame it in the larger context of his activities in the Dutch film industry, before and after the war.[1]

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P. Skopal, R. Vande Winkel (eds.), *Film Professionals in Nazi-Occupied Europe*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61634-2_8

The Early Days: Success and Failure[2]

Jan Teunissen was the son of a wealthy antique dealer who died in 1916, when Jan was barely 18 years old. Since the Netherlands were able to maintain their neutrality during World War I, the 'Great War' did not have a significant impact on his life. A considerable part of the family wealth was lost in the stock market crash of 1929 and the subsequent devaluation of shares. Nevertheless, Jan Teunissen remained well-off. He came into possession of his parental home and of other real estate, including a castle in the Dutch province of Limburg. He could afford long stays abroad and had an extravagant lifestyle. Teunissen fell under the spell of the film medium at an early age. Around August 1914, when he was barely 16 years old, he worked for a while as a volunteer at the Hollandia Studio in Haarlem, where he probably did small jobs and in exchange was allowed to hang around the studio. This gave him the opportunity to explore the trade and learn by doing.

Throughout his life, Teunissen would marry four times. The first marriage, which concluded in 1920, produced two children. Teunissen liked Great Britain very much and lived, together with his family, alternately in Great Britain and at their castle in the Netherlands. It was during a long stay overseas that Teunissen started making his own films. These were amateur recordings, filmed on 35 mm, portraying how he lived and travelled with his wife and two young boys (Fig. 8.1).

Around 1930, Teunissen joined the influential Dutch *Filmliga* (*Film League*) and released his first films. Some film enthusiasts reacted positively to some of his short avant-garde films, but it was with two documentaries that Teunissen really attracted attention. Both *Pierement* (Street Organ, 1931) and *Vrijdagavond / Sjaboss* (Friday Evening / The Sabbath, 1932) were beautiful documentary accounts of two Amsterdam neighbourhoods, the Jordaan and the Jewish quarter respectively (Fig. 8.2). By Dutch standards at the time, the films were revolutionary. Teunissen was one of the first in the Netherlands to experiment with mixing sound and adding sound effects. For this process of 'sonorisation' (as it was then called) he had to travel to the Tobis film studios in Epinay, in northern Paris. Critics were very enthusiastic about the films. Teunissen financed the films himself and did not manage to recoup his investments—but he did not really need to either. The most important thing was that he had become a leading filmmaker, whose work was even shown by the Film Society in London.[3]

Fig. 8.1 Frame enlargement from the *Dick and John* films, Teunissen's home movies from the 1920s, shot in 35 mm. Dick and John were his sons. (Geoffrey Donaldson Institute, the Netherlands)

In 1933, various Dutch institutions and benefactors collected funds to produce a feature film about William I. The project was a private initiative of national interest. The Prince of Orange, born 400 years earlier in 1533, had been the main leader of the Dutch Revolt against the Spanish Habsburgs. Therefore, he was considered the Dutch *Vader des Vaderlands* (Father of the Fatherland). Teunissen invested some of his own money in the film and reportedly contributed an amount greater than what the entire committee had managed to collect. It may come as no surprise that he was also directing the film. In addition, the project received financial and logistic support from the Philips factory in Eindhoven, where the film was also made. The result, *Willem van Oranje* (William of Orange, 1934), was the very first Dutch feature-length sound film. Featuring many static scenes of large groups in historical costumes and hardly any close-ups, the film contained some visually striking shots, but was tedious to watch. It

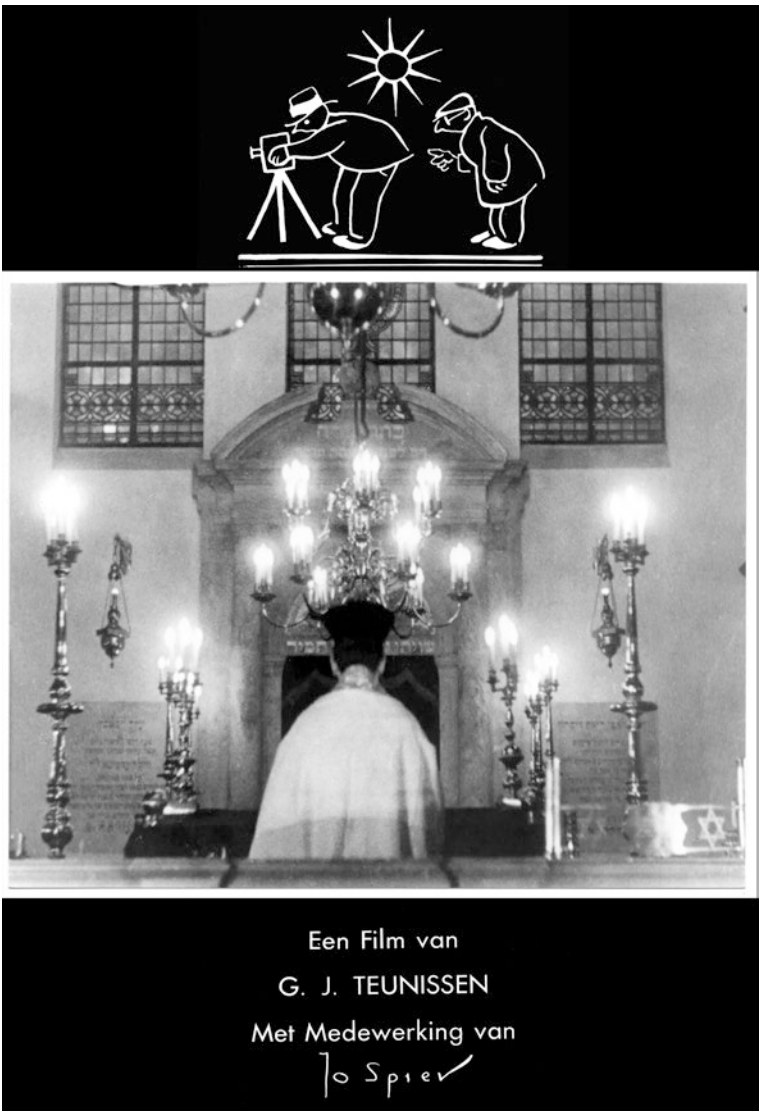

Fig. 8.2 Frame enlargements from the original version of Teunissen's *Vrijdagavond/Sjaboss* (*Friday Evening*, 1932). Jo Spier's drawing and his credit were removed at the beginning of the war. Around the same time, the synagogue scene was re-used in the Dutch version of *Der ewige Jude* (*The Wandering Jew*, 1940). (Geoffrey Donaldson Institute, the Netherlands)

lacked the qualities of Teunissen's documentaries and was received negatively by the press and by the public alike.

The Best Editor in the Dutch Film Business Becomes a 'May Beetle'[4]

After the failure of *William of Orange*, which also cost him a lot of money, it appeared that Teunissen's film career had come to a standstill. But, with the support of his second wife (Catharina Van Wageninge), Teunissen remained active. Teunissen and his wife belonged to the founding members of the *Nederlandsche Vakvereeniging van Filmkunstenaars* (Professional Association for Dutch Film Artists). Established to protect Dutch film professionals against the competition of foreign film professionals living in exile in the Netherlands, the association was short-lived, but was able to achieve the condition that several foreign people working in the Dutch film industry should be assisted by a Dutch counterpart.[5] This enabled Teunissen to become assistant-director to *De Big van het Regiment* (The Regiment's Pig, 1935), a Dutch film directed by Max Nosseck, who was a German director forced to leave the 'Third Reich' due to his Jewish background.[6] In the following years, Teunissen would edit several more films. Since he was on the studio lots quite often, he was sometimes asked to perform bit acting parts. He played, for instance, a small role in the Dutch-Italian film *De drie wenschen* (The Three Wishes, 1937), directed by Kurt Gerron (Fig. 8.3).[7] Like Nosseck, the German actor/director Gerron had to flee his homeland because he was Jewish.[8] Years later, in his 1942 book *De Film*, Teunissen would lash out at Gerron.[9] There is, however, no evidence that Teunissen was *openly* anti-Semitic in the 1930s. By contrast, he acted rather opportunistically, gladly accepting salaried jobs such as editing films by Jewish directors and producers. Privately, though, Teunissen scolded Jews because they supposedly hindered his full development in the Dutch film world.

All in all, Jan Teunissen did not have much to complain about. He served as editor on 14 of the 37 feature films (37%) that were made in the Netherlands in the 1930s. Several colleagues lauded his expertise and refinement as a cutter and he had become a household name within the Dutch film industry. Nevertheless, he seems to have harboured some frustration that his failed feature film debut had robbed him of the opportunity to become a full-fledged director himself. One must bear in mind that

Fig. 8.3 Jan Teulings and Jan Teunissen (with glasses) in one of the few surviving scenes from Kurt Gerron's *De drie wenschen* (*The three wishes*, 1937). (Geoffrey Donaldson Institute, the Netherlands)

Teunissen had ample financial means. He did not have to work in order to provide for his family. Yet, the urge to become more successful and to be 'important' was apparently greater than the need to make money.

The invasion of the German army in May 1940 resulted in the swift defeat and capitulation of the Dutch military forces. That summer, tens of thousands Dutch men and women joined the *Nationaal-socialistische Beweging in Nederland* (National Socialist Movement in the Netherlands, NSB). The party, founded by Anton Mussert in 1931, was expected to play an important role in the occupied Netherlands. Joining the NSB therefore seemed a wise thing to do, at least in the eyes of many Dutchmen. The old guard of the NSB grimly referred to such newcomers as 'May beetles' (*meikevers*): insects that also suddenly appeared in the month of May. Among these May beetles were Jan Teunissen, his wife Catharina, and the four children they had from their previous marriages (two each),

who all joined the NSB in August 1940. Unlike some other 'May beetles', each of them would show their dedication to the National Socialist cause in the years to come. By the end of the war, two sons had fought with the Germans on the Eastern front: one died and the other was severely wounded. Teunissen's third son served in the German merchant marine fleet while his daughter worked as a secretary for the NSB and for Henk Feldmeijer, commander of the *Nederlandsche SS* (Dutch SS). In the post-war trial against Teunissen, several people would testify that his wife Catharina, who had died in 1943, fully supported the path that the whole family had chosen.[10]

Occupation: 'Reorganising' Dutch Culture[11]

To understand Teunissen's wartime career, one needs to zoom out and consider the larger context of the German 'reorganisation' of the Dutch cultural sector. Shortly after the capitulation of the Dutch armed forces had been signed, Hitler decided to give the 'Germanic' Netherlands a *Zivilverwaltung* (civil administration), headed by *Reichskommissar* (Reich Commissioner) Arthur Seyss-Inquart. In the following weeks and months, several institutions were established or appropriated in order to control the Dutch cultural sector. But not all of these institutes had the same goals. Broadly speaking, there were two large, rivalling organisations that each sought control over the Dutch cultural field. On the one hand was Seyss-Inquart's administrative entity, the *Reichskommissariat* (Reich Commissariat). Seyss-Inquart's believed in the 'self-Nazification' of the Netherlands, which required stimulating 'spontaneous' commitment from the Dutch society, and thus the involvement of Dutch National Socialists. On the other hand was Goebbels' propaganda ministry, which strove for a more radical orientation of the Netherlands towards the Reich and was therefore less likely to involve the NSB and its leadership. The differing and often competing visions of the Reich Commissioner of the Netherlands and the German Minister of Propaganda resulted in the establishment of several bodies, which also tried to steer, or at least influence the Dutch cultural sphere.

The Reich Commissariat created the *Hauptabteilung Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* (Department of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, HAVP). This propaganda department was modelled after the German propaganda ministry but only answered to said ministry in a limited capacity, since it was responsible to the Reich Commissioner as well. Meanwhile,

the Reich Commissariat, in line with its credo of self-Nazification, also created a Dutch counterpart to the German HAVP. This *Departement van Volksvoorlichting en Kunsten* (Dutch Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Arts, DVK) was also structured like the German propaganda ministry. It was essentially populated by Dutchmen who had been 'approved' by the Reich Commissariat. It may come as no surprise that most of these were NSB members. The head (Secretary-General) of the DVK, Tobie Goedewaagen, was also an NSB member. Hopes that the NSB-dominated DVK would allow the Dutch National Socialists to effectively take charge of the Dutch cultural sphere were premature, though. Instead, the HAVP kept the DVK on a short leash and made sure that all important decisions were either drafted or approved by the Reich Commissariat. This also applied to the film sector.

Rival concepts and policies also impeded the foundation of the *Nederlandsche Kultuurkamer* (Dutch Culture Chamber, NKK), which was established in late 1941, but only became effective in early 1942. The NKK, presided over by DVK president Tobie Goedewaagen, was modelled after Goebbels' *Reichskulturkammer* (Reich Culture Chamber). It was established as an umbrella organisation, to control the entire cultural sector of the Netherlands. Everyone who was professionally active in Dutch cultural institutes or organisations had to join. The NKK was built slowly, eventually consisting of six subdivisions or 'guilds'. One of these was the *Filmgilde* (Film Guild), which was 'founded' in May 1942. However, the Film Guild was not really a new organisation. Its establishment, in fact, constituted a hostile takeover of the *Nederlandse Bioscoopbond* (Netherlands Cinema Alliance, NBB). The NBB, which dated back to 1921, was a powerful professional organisation that united Dutch film exhibitors, distributors, and producers. By converting the NBB into the Film Guild and by giving it an entirely new management structure, the Reich Commissariat tightened its grip on the Dutch film industry. The man appointed by the Reich Commissariat as the 'Leader' of the Film Guild, was Jan Teunissen. But how did he land this position? And how much power came with that title?

From 'May Beetle' to 'Film Czar'[12]

Jan Teunissen's decision to take his chances with the 'New Order' and to join the NSB in August 1940 was probably fuelled by frustration about his lack of success in the pre-war film community (Fig. 8.4). In his opinion,

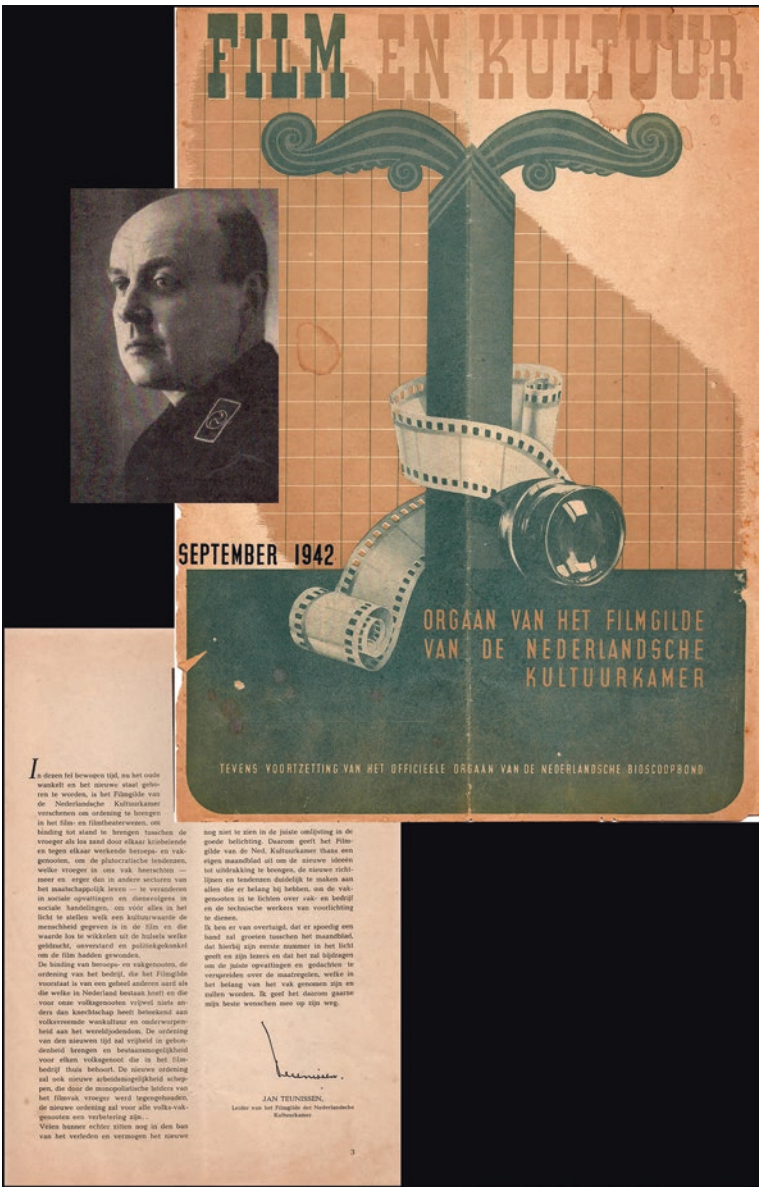
FILM EN KULTUUR
SEPTEMBER 1942
ORGAAN VAN HET FILMGILDE VAN DE NEDERLANDSCHE KULTUURKAMER
TEVENS VOORTZETTING VAN HET OFFICIEELE ORGAAN VAN DE NEDERLANDSCHE BIOSCOOPBOND
JAN TEUNISSEN.

Fig. 8.4 The first issue of *Film en Kultuur* (*Film and Culture*), the monthly magazine of the Dutch Film Guild, was published in September 1942. It featured an opening statement by Jan Teunissen (along with his photograph). (Geoffrey Donaldson Institute, the Netherlands)

Teunissen had not yet been able to reach his full potential—and now he saw an opportunity to change that. Indeed, he was not completely wrong, at least not in the short run. In a relatively brief period of time, Teunissen was rewarded with a string of positions that made him a central figure in the Dutch film business: a 'film czar' as he jokingly characterised himself.

In October 1940, Teunissen joined the NSB *Filmdienst* (NSB Film Section). By March 1941, he was leading that section, which was located in the basement of the huge building in the centre of The Hague that Teunissen owned and lived in. On 12 June 1941, Teunissen also became *begunstigend lid* (contributing member) of the *Nederlandsche SS* (Dutch SS), which by that time had changed its name to *Germaansche SS in Nederland* (Germanic SS in the Netherlands). Being a contributing member is not to be confused with being an actual member. Although he started making a monthly financial contribution, Teunissen did not actually join the organisation. In return, he received a badge and a subscription to SS publications. He was also expected to support and propagate the Germanic values of the SS.

In the fall of 1941, Teunissen was nominated by Tobie Goedewaagen for the position of Leader of the new Film Guild that replaced the NBB (and was integrated into the NKK).[13] It would take more than six months before the operation was finalised, but Teunissen ultimately received the position. Goedewaagen likewise nominated Teunissen for the position of head of the *Rijksfilmkeuring* (Dutch State Film Censorship Office), also in the fall of 1941. Teunissen was officially appointed to the post on 1 February 1942.[14] It is evident that these appointments, which also meant that Teunissen became a member of the NKK, were approved by the Reich Commissariat's HAVP. As Leader of the Film Guild, Teunissen would also become, on recommendation from the HAVP, one of the Dutch representatives in the *Internationale Filmkammer* (International Film Chamber).[15]

In 1943, Teunissen also became the head of the *Dienst Film* (Film Section) of the *Propagandadienst* (Propaganda Department) of the Dutch SS—it is not clear, though, what that section actually did. It may have been an honorary title, because by 1943 Teunissen had become an important name. In addition to all these positions, Teunissen directed a number of short films (described below), was involved as technical advisor in a large number of other films made in National Socialist circles, held radio chats about film-related issues, published in National Socialist magazines, and wrote a booklet imbued with anti-Semitism about cinema and the 'New Order'.[16] He was also to some extent involved in *Drie weken*

huisknecht (Butler for three weeks, 1942), the only Dutch feature film to be made in the German-occupied Netherlands. The Dutch production company *Polygoon-Profilti* was only able to finish this project with Teunissen's assistance, but Teunissen was not very enthusiastic about the artistic results.[17]

A detailed scrutiny of Teunissen's policy as Leader of the Film Guild that would pay particular attention to his competences (and the limits thereof) and his impact on the Dutch film world remains to be written. It is clear that the Film Guild issued a large number of circulars, signed by Teunissen, which imposed all manner of rules and regulations on cinema owners and others working in the film business: for example, an obligation to keep the lights semi-illuminated during the screening of the newsreel (to discourage hecklers or other disturbances), the compulsory inclusion of specific films in the programme, regulations for the sale of refreshments during the screening, directives for the showing of slides aimed at recruiting citizens for voluntary employment in Germany…. The list of obligations and recommendations was endless. Cinema owners had to keep a close eye on the circulars because NSB cinema inspectors appointed by the Film Guild closely monitored compliance with the rapidly changing regulations, and the penalties for non-compliance were severe. Many of these guidelines were similar to regulations that were issued in other German-occupied territories. This makes clear that, just like Jan Vanderheyden in neighbouring Belgium, Teunissen was the 'Leader' of the Dutch film world in name only. In reality, he was often simply signing or executing orders that had been written by the German authorities. Although his operational freedom was rather limited, he was not completely powerless. In several areas, he displayed elements of resistance against certain German officials. For example, as Leader of the Film Guild he spoke out against the *Ortskommandant* (German Local Commander) in the city of Gouda, who claimed at will free seats for his soldiers in a local cinema.[18] Whether his protests were successful, though, is unknown.

Particularly remarkable are some statements that Teunissen made as chairman of the Film Censorship Committee about a number of German and Czech feature films in 1942 and 1943. Chairing this committee was financially rewarding, but personally frustrating.[19] Already in July 1940, it had been ruled that Dutch censors were only allowed to review films that had already been approved by the German propaganda ministry.[20] Obviously, Dutch film censors were not supposed to overrule German decisions. The Film Censorship Committee was supposed to play a merely

formal role and accept the films that were shown to them. But Teunissen and his fellow censors, which included National Socialist comrades such as A.J. Richel (a film official at DVK) and Steven Barends (a poet and the Dutch translator of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*), repeatedly chose to defy the system. For example, the Czech feature film *Noční motýl* (Nocturnal Butterfly, 1941), which was released in a German dubbed version as *Der Nachtfalter*, was rejected because of its 'brothel scenes' and its 'atmosphere of decadence and fornication', which, moreover, was considered 'contrary to the Germanic philosophy of life'.[21] The prudish Dutch National Socialists also seem to have had the greatest difficulty with German entertainment films that were sometimes too spicy for their taste. The film *Der Hochtourist* (The Mountain Hiker, 1942), for example, was rejected on account of its 'low-level character' and its scenes of 'flirting, drinking and nude culture'.[22] Teunissen wrote in his assessment: 'The State Film Censorship Office regrets that it must give this verdict on this German film. However, it must be noted that the German film industry nowadays seems to be striving to produce comic films which, according to Dutch opinion, are so larded with naked women and flat sexual conversations that they will definitely arouse an aversion to German cinema among the Dutch public.'[23] Géza von Bolváry's *Opernball* (Opera Ball, 1939) was, according to Teunissen, 'pornographic filth'.[24] *Karneval der Liebe* (Carnival of Love, 1943) was rejected because it was considered an imitation 'of American and French (...) revue films' and for racial reasons: 'Even the actors and actresses have an almost expatriate appearance and are far removed from what is nowadays advocated as the ideal of Nordic and/or Germanic racial authenticity'.[25]

In these judgments, Teunissen and his colleagues pretended to be holier than the Pope. But they also demonstrated to have little understanding of German film politics and the role they had to play, as local censors. They did not understand—or did not want to understand?—that the Netherlands was essentially an export market for the Reich and that the German film industry was not only driven by National Socialist ideology, but also by an economic impetus to remain competitive and to provide entertainment that would do well at the box-office. It needed to be profitable and if the Dutch branches of Ufa and Tobis had been licensed to distribute a film in the Netherlands, then no local censor would stop them from doing so. As a consequence, their decisions to reject films were reversed by the Reich Commissioner's Office. In the end, Jan Teunissen and his national film censor board had nothing to say.

When Teunissen, as the president of the Film Guild, protested in the Spring of 1942 against the sale of Dutch cinemas to Germans, Alfred Greven, the *Reichsbeauftragter für das deutsche Filmwesen in den Niederlanden, Belgien und Frankreich* (Reich Appointee for the German film industry in the Netherlands, Belgium, and France) intervened. Greven, who did not reside in the Netherlands but held office in Paris and in Berlin, did not rebuke Teunissen directly, but asked the HAVP of the Reich Commissariat to do so. This insistence on the chain of command is interesting, because it reinforced to Teunissen that he had to follow orders from the Reich Commissariat. Even more interesting are the words Greven used towards his HAVP contact: 'It is simply not acceptable that we, who have after all won the war, should be denied this permission, the accordance of which is a mere formality. I would be very grateful if you could instruct Mr. Teunissen accordingly, and maybe point out to him he is only occupying that office because we [Germans] are here.'[26] Teunissen also protested in vain against the fact that studio facilities in the Netherlands were mainly used to produce German feature films.[27]

Film Production[28]

Teunissen made a number of films during the war and was closely involved in a number of others. At the beginning of the war, under the auspices of the NSB Film Service, he made the documentary *De St. Bavokerk the Haarlem* (The Saint Bavo Church in Haarlem, 1941), in which special attention was paid to the so-called 'early Germanic' decorations in this church (Fig. 8.5). In a solemn manner, to the accompaniment organ music by Bach, Teunissen shows a series of guild signs, solar images, and swastikas in the stained-glass windows in order to convince the cinemagoers that the Netherlands had always been 'Germanic'. Teunissen would declare after the war that this film was his aptitude test for the NSB. Whether the film was able to convince spectators is an open question (the film now comes across as rather static), but during the war it certainly proved influential. It served as a model for other films such as *Eeuwig Leevende Tekens* (Eternal Signs, 1941) by the Dutch SS member Peter Tijssen and *Beelden uit een grijs verleden* (Images from a Grey Past, 1941), which also dealt with the traces of the 'primeval Germanic' in the Dutch past. Teunissen also managed to attach *The Saint Bavo Church in Haarlem* to the Dutch release of *Der ewige Jude* (The Wandering Jew, 1940). It remains unclear to which extent Teunissen was involved in the production of this Dutch

Fig. 8.5 Frame enlargements from Teunissen's documentary *De St. Bavokerk the Haarlem* (*The Saint Bavo Church in Haarlem*, 1941). This 10-minute documentary short was shown together with the Dutch version of *Der ewige Jude* (*The Wandering Jew*, 1940) in October 1941. (Geoffrey Donaldson Institute, the Netherlands)

version, but it must be noted that the Dutch version contains footage of Teunissen's aforementioned film *Vrijdagavond/Sjaboss* (Friday Evening / The Sabbath, 1932). Footage that originally portrayed Jewish inhabitants of Amsterdam in a neutral and even positive light, was used ten years later

to vilify them. Teunissen must have authorised this and, given his background as an editor, might have been directly involved in the integration of his footage (and other footage of Dutch origin) into the German propaganda film. It is possible that the attachment of *The Saint Bavo Church in Haarlem* to *The Wandering Jew* in Dutch distribution (which was bound to make profit, since screenings were obligatory) was an indirect remuneration for Teunissen's contribution to the local version of the German anti-Semitic film.[29]

Of a different order was Teunissen's involvement in the Nederland Film company, which was based in The Hague. The company produced a series of shorts titled *Wat een Tijd* (What a Time) (Fig. 8.6). By employing satire, the series were intended to prepare the audience for the 'new order'. The lead character of the films was 'Roddelaere Verroest' (Rusty Chatterbox), an elderly gentleman who did not want to be involved with National Socialism and ended up in slapstick situations, in which he was ridiculed. His son, who did believe in the 'new order' and wanted to join the Jeugdstorm (the youth organisation of the NSB), was portrayed much more sympathetically. There is no proof that Teunissen was instructed to make such movies, but there is a parallel to be drawn between these shorts and between the *Mijnheer Dingemans & Madame Babbel* series that Vanderheyden and Kiel were making in Belgium. (See the chapter by Roel Vande Winkel elsewhere in this book.) Fifty-five to sixty prints of each *What a Time* episode were struck and screening of these shorts was mandatory for all Dutch cinemas. Whether these films managed to influence Dutch audiences is hard to judge, but relatively unlikely. For audiences that were already well-accustomed to the perfect comic timing of Laurel and Hardy and other foreign comedians before the war, the clumsiness of the Dutch actors must have been an abomination. One of the *What a Time* films directed by Teunissen, *Een dag vol spanning* (An exciting day, 1943), featured 'Mister Uienkruier' (Mr. Onion Bread), who was a typical Jewish caricature. Alongside the short animation film *Van Den Vos Reynaerde* (*About Reynaerd the Fox*, 1943), in which Teunissen was not involved but which was also produced by the Nederland Film company, *An exciting day* is the most 'important' Dutch contribution to anti-Semitic film propaganda.[30]

In May 1944, Teunissen was offered the role of (salaried) advisor to *Nederlandsch Nieuws* (Dutch News), a Dutch version of Ufa's *Auslandstonwoche* (Foreign Weekly Newsreel, 1944). This newsreel henceforth replaced *Tobis Hollandsch Nieuws* (Tobis Dutch News), a newsreel

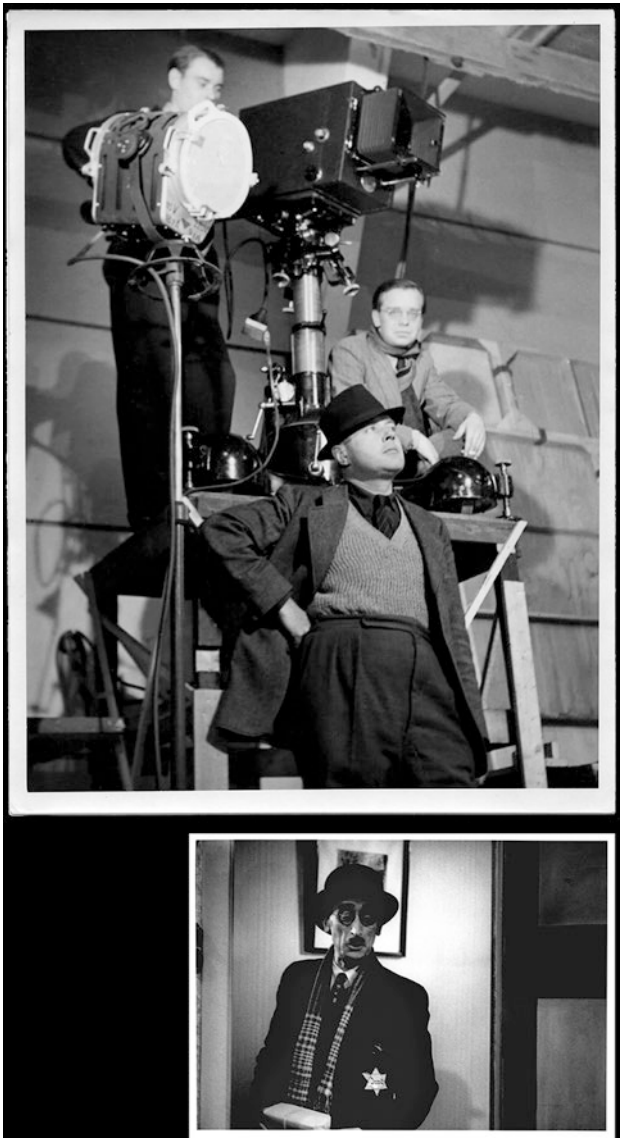

Fig. 8.6 Director Jan Teunissen and DP Jan Koelinga on the set of the *Wat een Tijd* (*What a Time*) film series. Below: the Jewish stereotype 'Mister Uienkruier' (Mr. Onion Bread) in the episode *Een dag vol spanning* (*An exciting day*, 1943). (Geoffrey Donaldson Institute, the Netherlands)

that had been controlled by the Reich Commissariat, but which the Propaganda Ministry had been trying to terminate for a long time.[31] However, given the military developments of the time, the days of the 'new' newsreel were numbered. The final issue was released on 2 September 1944, only a few months into Teunissen's tenure.

In the summer of 1944, Teunissen was heavily involved in the production of the propaganda film *De Rembrandtdag* (Rembrandt Day, 1944). The movie, a tribute to the 'Germanic' painter who had been adopted by the NSB, was obligatorily screened in all Dutch cinemas in the summer of 1944 as part of 'Rembrandt Day' (15 July 1944), which had been established by the National Socialists.

Personal Behaviour[32]

Several post-war testimonies indicate that Teunissen regularly behaved fanatically and violently during the occupation. He repeatedly resorted to verbal and even physical violence in conflicts with opponents. He did not hesitate to lash out against (lower-ranked) members of the 'movement', like an NSB cinema operator from Zeist, who became deaf in one ear after Teunissen beat him in The Hague. He intimidated people by threatening that he would inform the Germans about things that could get them into trouble.[33] Teunissen also enjoyed walking around with his gun (which he already possessed before the war) and in one post-war interview, he fondly reminisced about firing a full load of bullets into a wall during a drunken night with his friend, the SS-man Feldmeijer.[34]

It has already been mentioned that, before the war, there was a striking discrepancy between how Teunissen publicly behaved towards Jews (and worked for them) and how he spoke about them in private. During the war he also displayed such split behaviour. Before the occupation, Teunissen had always behaved respectfully towards the social-democrat chairman of the *Centrale Commissie voor de Filmkeuring* (Central Committee for the Censorship of Films), David Van Staveren, who was of Jewish origin. After the capitulation of May 1940, Van Staveren resigned as chairman of the censorship committee but continued receiving a reduced fee. Teunissen, who became his successor, maintained a friendly public countenance towards his predecessor, but intrigued against him behind his back. He wrote a letter to the Secretary General of the DVK, Tobie Goedewaagen, proposing he stop paying the fee Van Staveren was entitled to.[35] Fortunately for Van Staveren, Goedewaagen refused.

Teunissen, who wrote several anti-Semitic articles, would later publicly attack Van Staveren in his brochure *De Film*,[36] in which he also attacked Kurt Gerron, as mentioned above.

Other reprehensible activities of Teunissen during the war include the actions he undertook to make sure a Jewish cameraman (Akos Farkas) could no longer work for the Profilti company and his involvement in a razzia in the town of Wassenaar in February 1943.[37] Teunissen would remain a staunch National Socialist until the end of the war. On 5 September 1944, a date that went down in history as 'Dolle Dinsdag' (Mad Tuesday), many Dutch people who had been collaborating with the Germans, alarmed by news and rumours about the Allied advance in Belgium and the liberation of the Belgian port of Antwerp, fled the Netherlands. Teunissen, however, remained in The Hague, where he stayed until the Netherlands were liberated in the Spring of 1945. Not much is known about his whereabouts and activities during the last winter of the war, which has been called 'Hongerwinter' (literally translated: 'hunger winter') due to the famine that hit the German-occupied Netherlands. The lack of information about Teunissen's whereabouts is obviously linked to his general lack of activity in the field of film. In most parts of the country, the film business had come to a standstill because of the energy shortage. On September 30, Teunissen's son died on the Eastern Front, however, due to the poor communication connections Teunissen was only informed about this in November 1944.[38]

The Aftermath[39]

Teunissen was arrested on 8 May 1945 in the Hague. He was initially locked up in Scheveningen prison, where NSB Leader Anton Mussert and NSB propaganda chief Max Blokzijl were also held. Mussert and Blokzijl would both be sentenced to death and executed. Teunissen, who would not receive such a harsh punishment, was put to work in the officers' mess of the Canadian Army and later on transferred to the Duindorp neighbourhood of The Hague, where a camp had been established to hold collaborators. From there, he would be transferred to several other camps.

The trial against Teunissen started on 10 May 1948. About 40 people from the Dutch film community were willing to testify against him. There was a large stack of evidence, including his *De Film* brochure, his membership cards to the NSB and the SS, and personal correspondences of the

Teunissen family. The judge found Teunissen guilty of collaborating with the enemy and sentenced him to four years' imprisonment. Teunissen was also deprived of his civil rights: the right to vote or to stand for election, the right to hold public office, and the right to serve in the armed forces. Since it had been proven that Teunissen had also profited financially from his collaborationist activities, he had to pay a fine of 25,000 Dutch guilders.[40] On the basis of this verdict, Teunissen once again disappeared behind bars. He was the most severely punished member from the Dutch film business. Nevertheless, Teunissen did not have to serve his sentence in full and was released on 3 November 1948. He undertook legal action to have the judgement against him reversed, but failed. He had to sell his house in The Hague in order to pay the fine that the court imposed on him.[41] As in several other countries, Dutch citizens accused of collaboration could not only be prosecuted by the judicial system, but could also be forced to justify themselves vis-à-vis investigation committees established by the industries in which they had been active. Thus, while still in state custody, Teunissen had to appear before the *Zuiveringscommissie voor het Filmwezen* (Cleansing Committee of the Film Industry). The committee was established to review the wartime behaviour of many people who had been active in the film business and had the power to impose various sanctions. The highest possible sentence was the prohibition against activity in the film sector for a period of ten years. It is clear that this committee, which included the influential Catholic film critic Janus van Domburg, wanted to set an example and Teunissen was therefore disqualified from working in the film sector for eleven years, instead of the 'maximum' of ten years.[42] The prohibition started, retroactively, in 1945. As a result, Teunissen lost his private possessions and was not allowed to work in the film industry until the summer of 1956. His personal archive, which contains very few documents about the wartime period, shows that Teunissen had a difficult time landing a job after his punishments expired. He eventually secured a position as an editor of advertisement films for the company of A.W.H. Kommer, an old NSB comrade. Around 1960, Teunissen left the film industry altogether and started a mail order company that became rather successful.

Conclusion

This chapter tried to sketch the persona of Jan Teunissen in all his complexity (Fig. 8.7).[43] He was a talented avant-gardist, an innovative documentary maker, a pioneer in sound film, a celebrated editor, and a failed feature film director. But, he was also an anti-Semitic opportunist, who joined the Dutch National Socialists as soon as the Netherlands were occupied and became an ardent National Socialist almost overnight. He was able to further climb the ranks after becoming a contributing member of the SS. In a short period of time, Teunnissen, a film editor with no authority or mandate within the pre-war Dutch film industry, became the nominal leader of that same Dutch film sector. His power to actually 'lead' the sector was very limited, though, as proven by his failed attempts to censor German films, to prevent Dutch cinemas passing into German

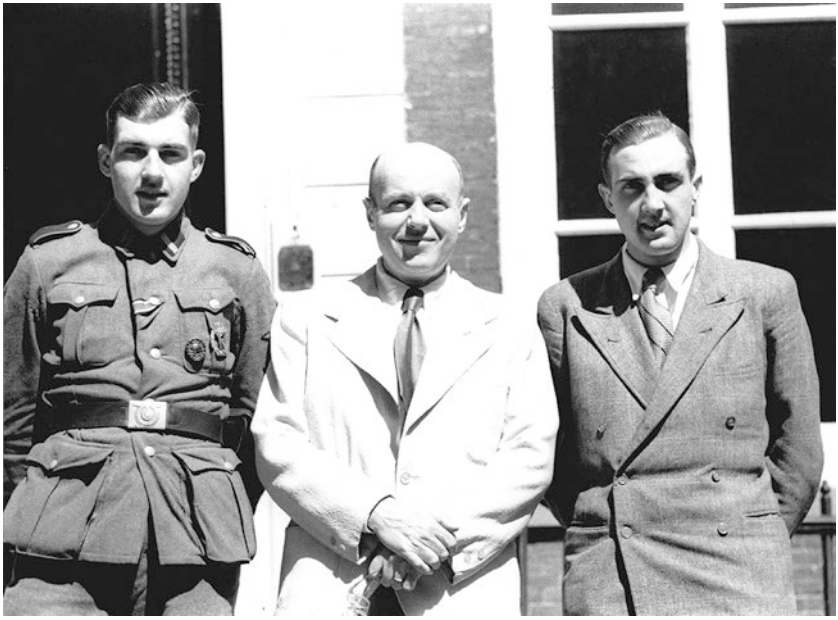

Fig. 8.7 Teunissen with Dick and John, his two sons, outside their house on Lange Voorhout street, The Hague. (Geoffrey Donaldson Institute, the Netherlands)

hands, or to stop Dutch film studios being used by German production companies. There is no indication that he was able to achieve anything as member of the International Film Chamber either. In many ways, Teunissen was a servant, executing orders that had been drafted by the occupying forces. Nevertheless, on a personal level, his power gave him the opportunity to do what he enjoyed doing and to profit personally. His new position gave him the possibility to make propagandistic documentary shorts and to pressure, even obligate, cinemas to screen those productions, ensuring himself a source of revenue and royalties.

Notes

1. This book chapter is largely based on Barten, E. (1991) Van gevierd avantgardist tot paria. Leven en werken van Jan Teunissen, 1898–1975, pp. 73–103 in Dibbets, K. et al. (eds) *Jaarboek Mediageschiedenis 3*. Amsterdam: Stichting Mediageschiedenis. The text has been updated and translated with the assistance of Roel Vande Winkel.
2. This section is largely based on documents retrieved in Teunissen's personal archive. This archive, which contains very few documents about his wartime activities, was probably 'cleansed' by Teunissen. It was preserved for many years by film historian Geoffrey Neville Donaldson (1929–2002), at whose home the author accessed the archive. The archive is currently kept at the Eye Institute in Amsterdam. More details can be found in the notes of Barten (1991), pp. 74–77.
3. Hogenkamp, B. (1988) *De Nederlandse documentaire film, 1920–1940*. Amsterdam: Van Gennep, pp. 72–73.
4. Barten (1991), pp. 83–85.
5. From 1933 onwards, numerous Germans of Jewish origin would migrate to the Netherlands. The Frank family from Frankfurt (daughter Anne Frank being only four years old when they moved to Amsterdam in 1933) is the best-known example. Other examples, in the film business, are Max Ophüls (of Jewish origin) and Detlef Sierck (who later changed his name to Douglas Sirk and married a Jewish woman), who both made films in the Netherlands before travelling to the United States.
6. Hogenkamp (1988), pp. 82–83. Dittich van Weringh, K. (1987) *Der Niederländische Spielfilm der dreißiger Jahre und die deutsche Filmemigration*. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, pp. 39–40 and 67–68.
7. The film was also made in an Italian version (*I tre desideri*, 1937), co-directed by Giorgio Ferroni.
8. Gerron would stay in the Netherlands until 1943, when he was deported to Westerbork and then transferred to Theresienstadt and eventually to

Auschwitz, where he was murdered. In Theresienstadt, Gerron was forced to make a propaganda film about the camp. See Margry, K. (1992) 'Theresienstadt' (1944–1945). The Nazi Propaganda Film depicting the Concentration Camp as Paradise, pp. 145–162 in *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 12 (2). See also, Dittich van Weringh, K. (1987), passim.

9. Teunissen, J. (1942) *De Film: film en filmwezen in Nederland*. 's-Gravenhage: De Schouw, pp. 24–25.
10. This is described in more detail in Barten (1991), pp. 83–85. Many documents about the wartime activities of Teunissen and his family were found in his judicial file at the *Centraal Archief Bijzondere Rechtspleging* (Central Archive of Special Judicial Procedures, CABR) in the Netherlands. CABR files are now in the National Archives in The Hague. The Teunissen file at the NIOD, Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies was also consulted.
11. Hirschfeld, G. (1991) *Bezetting en collaboratie. Nederland tijdens de oorlogsjaren 1940–1945*. Haarlem: Hecht. Hoffman, G. (1972) *NS-Propaganda in den Niederlanden Organisation Und Lenkung Der Publizistik Unter Deutscher Besatzung 1940–1945*. München-Pullach: Verlag Dokumentation. Schiweck (2002) '*[...] weil wir lieber im Kino sitzen als in Sack und Asche.': Der deutsche Spielfilm in den besetzten Niederlanden 1940–1945*. München: Waxmann. Schiweck (2011) Dutch-German Film Relations under German Pressure and Nazi Occupation, 1933–45, pp. 207–219 in Vande Winkel, R. & D. Welch (eds.) *Cinema and the Swastika: The International Expansion of Third Reich Cinema*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
12. Barten (1991), pp. 83–89.
13. Schiweck (2002), p. 72.
14. Schiweck (2002), p. 80.
15. Schiweck (2002), p. 264.
16. Teunissen's most important writings during the Second World War are mentioned in Barten (1991), p. 101.
17. Barten (1990), Drie Weken huisknecht teruggevonden, *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 19 September. Schiweck (2002), pp. 268–271.
18. Eye, Geoffrey Donaldson collection, Teunissen personal archives. Letter from Teunissen to Haagn, 16 July 1942.
19. Teunissen was, as president, probably the only salaried member in the censorship office. Schiweck (2002), p. 395. Others received a daily remuneration for days when they had been active.
20. Schiweck (2002), p. 76.
21. The censorship files of the films mentioned in this section were consulted at the Dutch Ministry of the Interior in The Hague, which held the

censorship files that are now at the National Archives in The Hague (https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/zoekhulpen/filmkeuringsrapporten-1928-1960). Censorship cards (an incomplete shadow archive) were also consulted at the former *Nederlands Filmmuseum* in Amsterdam (currently: Eye). See also www.cinemacontext.nl

22. National Archives, censorship files (as mentioned in note 21).
23. National Archives, censorship files (as mentioned in note 21).
24. Schiweck (2002), p. 83.
25. National Archives, censorship files (as mentioned in note 21).
26. The original document (BArch R177/146) is quoted by Schiweck (2002), p. 145.
27. Schiweck (2002), p. 394.
28. Barten (1991), pp. 89–90.
29. See also Barten, E. (1989) Negentieneenenveertig. De ontvangst van Duitse antisemitische films in Nederland tijdens de bezetting, in Wijfjes, H. (ed.), *Jaarboek Mediageschiedenis*, Amsterdam: Stichting Mediageschiedenis, pp. 183–215.
30. Barten (2011) Dutch Anti-Semitic Colour Animation in World War II: Robert Van Genechten's Van Den Vos Reynaerde (1943), pp. 1–41 in *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 31 (1).
31. Vande Winkel, R. (2004) Nazi newsreels in Europe, 1939–1945: the many faces of Ufa's foreign weekly newsreel (Auslandstonwoche) versus the German weekly newsreel (Deutsche Wochenschau), pp. 5–34 in *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 24 (1). Vande Winkel, R. (2014) Filmjournaals in Bezet Nederland (1940–1944): De Nederlandse Nieuwsfilmoorlog in Internationaal Perspectief, pp. 72–92 in *TMG Journal for Media History*, 6 (1).
32. Barten (1991), pp. 90–92.
33. National Archives, CABR, Teunissen file, J. Jessurun (4 March 1947).
34. Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld en Geluid, Interviews Stichting Film & Wetenschap (FSW), interviews by Dr. L. Schuursma with Teunissen (13 and 27 November 1964, 8 January 1965).
35. National Archives, CABR, Teunissen file, official statements from David van Steveren and J.H. Van Zwijndrecht.
36. Teunissen (1942), p. 28.
37. National Archives, CABR, Teunissen file.
38. National Archives, CABR, Teunissen file.
39. Barten (1991), pp. 93–96.
40. The public interest in this case is demonstrated by the fact that the court ruling was printed in the trade press: *Nieuw Weekblad voor de Cinematografie* (1948).

41. National Archives, CABR, Teunissen file, correspondence between Teunissen and Brakema, 1949.
42. The original files are lost, this statement is based on corroborating evidence, see Barten (1991), pp. 102–103. Hogenkamp, B. (1995) Het grote stilzwijgen: de filmzuivering in Nederland, pp. 4–17 in *GBG-Nieuws*, 34.
43. Barten (1991), pp. 97–98.

CHAPTER 9

Jan Fethke: The Artist's Lot in the Shadow of the Swastika

Krzysztof Trojanowski

In the moment of the German aggression on Poland on the warm and sunny Friday of 1 September 1939, the programmes of the fifty-five cinemas that were open for business offered approximately eighty films, including three premieres of American films that had opened in the USA earlier that year. In the heat of the battle for Warsaw, on 15 and 16 September, at the request of the major Stefan Starzyński, the cinema *Napoleon* opened and screened Richard Pottier's *Le Disque 413* (Disk 413, 1936).[1] This French spy drama, one of the great hits of the previous months, was the last film to be screened in Warsaw before the German occupation. With the rapidly changing situation, most of the capital's cinemas ceased to exist or were converted into shelters for refugees. In the first two months of the occupation, all cinemas remained closed. When cinema life resumed, it was under completely different circumstances.

Adolf Hitler's decree from October 1939 officially established the General Government—also referred to as the *Generalgouvernement für die besetzten polnischen Gebiete* (General Governorate for the occupied

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P. Skopal, R. Vande Winkel (eds.), *Film Professionals in Nazi-Occupied Europe*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61634-2_9

Polish Region)—on the Polish territory occupied by the German army. The General Government, which was envisioned as a labour colony of the Reich, consisted of four districts and included the cities of Warsaw, Krakow, Radom, and Lublin (after the German attack on the USSR in June 1941, the General Government expanded to include territories further east—becoming the District of Galizia with administrative headquarters at Lviv). The territory of the new administrative unit was half the size of the pre-war Republic of Poland. The western and northern parts of Poland, the so-called *Wartheland*, were directly annexed to the Third Reich and Hitler intended to completely Germanize the population of the territory, which had been under Prussian administration during the nineteenth century. The majority of the million Poles from the *Wartheland* were moved to the General Government. Those who stayed in the area were supposed to be Germanized and use of the Polish language was forbidden to them. The eastern Polish territories came under the control of the USSR on 17 September, in compliance with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact concluded between Germany and the Soviet Union less than a month earlier. The General Government was fully subordinate to the Third Reich, but had certain autonomy in administration and finance. The office of Governor-General was given to Hans Frank, General Chief of *Oberkommando Ost* (Civil Administration at High Command in the East), who was a lawyer by profession, a long-term adherent of the Nazi movement, and privately an art lover. He chose Krakow as his place of residence and made the city the "capital" of occupied Poland. With the appointment of Frank in late October 1939, the restrained policies of occupation changed. Universities, schools, libraries, and museums were closed, and the playing of music by Polish composers was banned. About two million Poles were taken away to work in the Reich.[2]

From the beginning, the intention of the Nazi invaders was to carry out a ruthless policy of terror, repression, and plunder, to exploit and exterminate the population, to destroy the culture, and Germanize the territory. The implementation of this plan was supervised, though not always with the same consistency, by an organization that was responsible for censorship among other things. From 1940, this office was called the *Hauptabteilung für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* (Central Branch for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda—HAVP) with a division for film affairs; a year later, it was renamed the *Hauptabteilung Propaganda* (Chief Propaganda Department) with a division for film affairs at the General Government. *Reichsbeauftragter für die deutsche Filmwirtschaft* (Reich

Commissioner for the German Film Industry), Max Winkler, sought to gain control over the Polish cinemas. To this end, the *Haupttreuhandstelle Ost* (Trust Office for the General Government), which was established in November 1939 and headed by Winkler, confiscated all movable and immovable property of the former Polish state as well as all properties of Jewish entrepreneurs, including cinemas.[3] Only 'Germans' (i.e., *Volksdeutsche*—persons, whose language and culture was supposed to have German ethnic origins, although they lacked German citizenship) and Ukrainians were eligible to apply for a licence to run cinemas.

The cinema industry was reorganized in accordance with Winkler's plans for the monopolization of film production and exhibition. The *Film- und Propagandamittel-Vertriebsgesellschaft GmbH* (Film and Propaganda Marketing Company, FIP) was established in 1940. This new company had its headquarters in Krakow and technical base in Warsaw, on the premises of the requisitioned film company Falanga. The FIP operated as a limited liability company, yet in fact it was under German administration, financed by the state. Its tasks included developing, producing, and distributing films as well as commissioning the printing of cinema programmes. In practice, FIP had a monopoly on production and, after 1942, on exhibition as well. Winkler commissioned the production capacities with various jobs.[4] The Warsaw FIP office initially consisted of three departments, the first of which was tasked with copying German films with added Polish, Belarusian, and Ukrainian subtitles for the occupied former Soviet territories. The second department produced newsreels about the life in the General Government, while the third one was tasked with production of short films for propagandistic, educational, and advertising purposes. At the beginning of 1941, the production of newsreels was taken over by the newly created *Deutsche Wochenschau—Aussenstelle GG Warschau*, which reported directly to the German Ministry of Propaganda. The newsreels combined materials sent from Berlin (so-called *Standard-Woche*)[5] with those made locally according to the guidelines of the management in Krakow, whose purpose was to ensure a coherent propaganda message. The company's address did not change, so the FIP's laboratory and technical staff were still used. The majority of the employees (around thirty people) were technicians (operators, editors, sound engineers, graphic designers, etc.), most of whom had been previously employed at Falanga, the largest and most modern film studio in pre-war Poland. In 1940–1941, FIP also employed directors to finalize the work on movies, whose production had started prior to the outbreak of the war. The

person who supervised this work was Jan Fethke, and of the six features in production at the moment of occupation, two were directed by him: *Złota Maska* (Golden Mask, 1940) and *Przez łzy do szczęścia* (Through Tears to Happiness, 1941).[6]

Jan Fethke, the Mediator Who Failed (Figs. 9.1 and 9.2)

Born in 1903 in the then German town of Oppeln (Opole), Fethke grew up in a Polish family, and was in constant contact with the Polish language and culture. He graduated from a humanistic high school in Opole in 1919, and at the same time completed his maturity exam, as an external student, in the Polish state high school in Cieszyn. When Poland lost the 1921 plebiscite and Opole remained in Germany, the entire family—his mother, two brothers, and sister (his father had died earlier)—moved to Bydgoszcz and applied for Polish citizenship. Meanwhile Jan, endowed with documents declaring him a German citizen, began his studies at Gdańsk Technical University. After three semesters of study, he left for Berlin to continue his education—but as an aficionado of cinema he first of all began working at German film studios. He also pursued his second passion, Esperanto, and published in this language under the pen name of Jean Forge. In 1924–1935 he worked as assistant director and scriptwriter; among others, he wrote two film scripts for the famous left-wing studio Prometheus Film. Besides Berlin, he also worked in the film industry in Paris and Stockholm, and continued to foster contacts with Polish filmmakers. In 1935, when invited by the Film Producers' Union and further encouraged by other directors, he relocated to Poland and began working for the Warsaw studio Blok-Muzafilm as a valued screenwriter. On 1 September 1939, Fethke was arrested as a German citizen and taken to the Bereza Kartuska prison camp for political opponents of the Polish authorities, where he stayed for eighteen days, until the camp was closed down by Soviet forces.[7]

Under the German occupation of western Poland, Polish filmmakers established a committee to negotiate with the authorities about the possibility to continue their work under the new conditions.[8] As a German citizen and owner of the Tempo-Film company which processed German films,[9] Jan Fethke, who also had several years of experience working in Berlin studios, gained a privileged position in the Warsaw film industry. In

Fig. 9.1 Program for the Jan Fethke film *Przez łzy do szczęścia* (*Through Tears to Happiness*, 1941). Front and back view. (Krzysztof Trojanowski private collection)

Streszczenie:
Lekarz Jan Mankiewicz, założyciel i opiekun sierocińca w małym miasteczku, poznaje sławną aktorkę Lenę Merwińską. Miłość do aktorki stwarza głęboki konflikt w duszy lekarza. Dla ukochanej kobiety musiałby opuścić sierociniec, by zająć odpowiednie stanowisko w stolicy. W walce między uczuciem kobiety a bezgranicznym przywiązaniem dzieciami początkowo zwycięża serce kobiety. Lekarz wyjeżdża. Lecz na progu wielkiej kariery, idąc za głosem obowiązku, rezygnuje z osobistego szczęścia i wraca do opuszczonych dzieci. Słynna aktorka zrywa zagraniczne kontrakty i postanawia wraz z ukochanym człowiekiem opiekować się dziatwą sierocińca.
Niech żyje Pan Doktór!
Realizacja:
JAN FETHKE
Eksploatacja:
F.I.P. WARSCHAU — KRAKAU
W głównych rolach:
IRENA MALKIEWICZ-DOMAŃSKA
FRANCISZEK BRODNIEWICZ

Fig. 9.2 Program for the Jan Fethke film *Przez łzy do szczęścia* (*Through Tears to Happiness*, 1941). Inside view. (Krzysztof Trojanowski private collection)

an interview published by the Polish-language *Nowy Kurier Warszawski* daily in mid-February 1941, Fethke spoke broadly about plans to reactivate filmmaking in occupied Poland. The text called Fethke 'the head director of the General Government' and 'the chief', who had gained professional experience in Germany, France, and Sweden and was now tasked with managing the revival of the film industry in the General Government.[10] The premieres of three films completed 'under the new conditions' (*Złota Maska*, *Przez łzy do szczęścia* and *Żołnierz królowej Madagaskaru*) were a positive indicator of upcoming developments and, in March 1941, Fethke looked to the future with optimism: 'Our main task is the creation of art. Its atmosphere must be healthy and comfortable for everyone. Film is a great thing, it must have decent frames […] We have the conditions, we have a lot of willingness, all we need to do is to work and work'. His plans included recruiting and training young talents and creating a new type of cinema, one that is truly 'national' and not based primarily on a star system, as was allegedly the case before 1939. Readers of the German *Warschauer Zeitung* daily also read that Jan Fethke wanted to make a film about the 'martyrdom of Germans in the Polish concentration camp in Bereza Kartuska'.[11] The script would have likely been inspired by the experiences of the director himself from his brief stay in the camp as a 'German citizen' at the outbreak of the war.

The plans of the German occupying forces seemed serious and detailed to such an extent that the *Jutro* underground newspaper published a text about them on the same day as the interview with Jan Fethke appeared. The author of the announcement with the suggestive title '*Nowa podłość*' (New iniquity) declares: 'The Germans are planning to open the *Falanga* film studio in Warsaw in the near future. As early as in February the studio is set to start shooting "Polish" films. The program accepted by the Reich Ministry of Propaganda includes the production of ten "Polish" films, divided into five dramas and five comedies. We do not need to add that in this Falanga team there is no place for Polish artists, who respect the greatness of their stage calling and understand the mission of Polish art, only for those to whom money does not stink – craftsmen of the stage, who are not artists in spirit and calling'.[12]

The initially propitious atmosphere changed after the killing of popular actor and Nazi collaborator Igo Sym in March 1941. His assassination on the orders of a Polish Underground court reverberated through the country and abroad, and resulted in far-reaching repressions and increasingly rigid policies on culture.[13] The future plans to make entertainment

films became uncertain and only the intervention of a higher instance could help. Thus, Jan Fethke, Hans Guttenberger from the *Department of People's Education and Propaganda*, and Willy Busch, the chief of the FIP, went to Berlin to request official permission to proceed with the planned production. However, they did not manage to convince Goebbels, who only agreed to the production of propaganda films and newsreels. After the war Fethke stated, 'as far as I know, propaganda films and newsreels were filmed; I did not participate in this work'.[14] Under the auspices of the FIP, at least ten short films were made, including the anti-Jewish *Życie ludzkie w niebezpieczeństwie!* (Human life in danger!, 1941), also known as *Żydzi – wszy – tyfus* (Jews – Lice – Typhoid), which had three language versions—German, Polish, and Ukrainian—and was scripted and directed by a German named Herbert Gerdes. The production also included educational films, and three commercials for the ersatz coffee produced by the German company Franck, which was popular in Poland. Within a month after his return from Berlin, Jan Fethke left for Prague, where he worked with the film production company *Tobis*. He then went back to Warsaw for a short time, disposed of his flat, and returned, via Berlin, to Prague, where he continued his work for *Tobis* and also began cooperating with the film production company *Bavaria Filmkunst*. In the Prague studios during 1943, he made for *Tobis* the medium-length film *Rasselbande* (*Bunch of Rogues*) and for Bavaria the psychological drama with child actors, *Bravo, kleiner Thomas* (*Bravo, Little Thomas*).[15]

In September 1944, while still in Prague—working at that time on a script about the life of composer Stanisław Moniuszko—Fethke was arrested by the Gestapo and charged with spreading defeatism and anti-German propaganda in the army. Furthermore, the union of German filmmakers accused him of maintaining contacts with Jewish filmmakers such as Jacques Companeez, a scriptwriter of Russian origin, who settled first in Berlin and then in Paris. The director was sentenced to four years of hard labour and first sent to the Waldheim prison, and later transferred to build fortifications in Saxony. He was liberated by the Soviet army in May 1945. He returned to Prague, and from there he came back to Poland in early 1946 at the invitation of the head of *Film Polski* Aleksander Ford.[16]

After the War

In 1947, the Prosecutor's Office of the District Court in Warsaw became interested in Jan Fethke's life during the occupation. The charges they brought against him concerned committing a crime under article 2 of the decree of the Polish Committee of National Liberation of 31 August 1944 (in the wording of the decree of 10 December 1946) 'on sentencing fascist-Nazi criminals guilty of murder and abuse of civilians and war prisoners, and traitors of the Polish Nation'.[17] The court became interested in the case because of an article published in the daily *Życie Warszawy* by Jacek Wołowski (the pen-name of Stanisław Sachnowski, who was an underground soldier during the occupation and a member of the *Bureau of Information and Propaganda of the Headquarters of the Home Army*), who from 1946 ran a campaign in the newspaper aimed at holding to account and removing from the cultural life people discredited by cooperation with the Nazis. The journalist tracked real and alleged collaborators, denounced their supposed cleverness and sense of impunity, criticized the fact that they were entrusted with prominent positions, reprimanded industry verification committees for their indulgence, and accused them of social and financial connections with suspects. In the article '*Jeszcze jeden, choć nie ostatni…*' (One more, though not the last…) from April 1947, Wołowski attacked Jan Fethke, quoting a letter, which was actually sent in defence of the director by employees of the *Film Polski* company[18] who were outraged by 'harmful rumours about their colleague' spread by 'ill-willed people'.[19] The letter proclaims: 'We firmly state that our colleague Fethke did nothing which would cast a shadow over his loyalty to the Polish nation. He always emphasized that he is German only by citizenship, but a Pole by birth and origin. He did not work in German film propaganda, he only finalized two or three Polish films started before the war, as did other Polish directors'.[20]

Wołowski responded to the letter by quoting fragments of an interview for *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*, in which Jan Fethke allegedly admitted that he was the chief director of film production in the General Government and, concludes Wołowski, a high official of the Chief Propaganda Department.[21] According to Wołowski, the director had used influential contacts to obtain Polish citizenship after his post-war return to Poland. Fethke had indeed applied for Polish citizenship in 1946 (as he had already done before, back in 1939 after a five-year stay in Poland, but the outbreak of the war interrupted that application process). His application was

supported in writing by such people as composer Zygmunt Wiehler, scriptwriter Ludwik Starski, director Leonard Buczkowski and, most importantly, the head of *Film Polski*, Lieutenant-Colonel director Aleksander Ford. In February 1946, Ford wrote to the Department of Security in Łódź: '[…] Citizen Jan Fethke is a scriptwriter and film director of outstanding skills, in the present situation he is almost irreplaceable. Fethke is to organize in Poland, within the *Film Polski* enterprise, leading training courses for directors and scriptwriters, thereby undertaking pioneering work in this field. I should mention here that a number of trustworthy persons confirmed irreproachable and Polish-patriotic behaviour of citizen Fethke during the occupation'.[22] After reviewing the case, the Department raised no objections to Fethke's application. Consequently, he not only received Polish citizenship but also, as noted by Wołowski, a high-ranking job in *Film Polski*, 'a sizeable salary', two flats, and even had two cars at his disposal.

In 1947, following the decrees of the Verification Committee of the Film Producers' Union, the management of *Film Polski* took disciplinary measures against Fethke.[23] The journalist Wołowski was the first witness to testify and he repeated the accusations included in his newspaper article that Fethke was the main director of film production in the General Government and acted to the detriment of the Polish state by creating Nazi propaganda. Although he had his own company *Tempo-Film*, it is highly possible that this undertaking by Fethke was just a smokescreen to obtain appropriate documents (as the firm's address was that of his small flat). However, he was never an employee of the FIP or the Propaganda Office, and in his testimony presented the activity of finishing Polish films under the occupation as a service to the Polish nation: 'it seemed both to me and to [the directors] Mieczysław Krawicz and Leonard Buczkowski that we were working for Poland's benefit, by making Polish films we are preserving Polish language'.[24] Nor did Fethke accept any official post from the German authorities, although he was offered incentives such as a large flat and a profitable licence to operate a café.[25]

Fethke's laudable attitude during the occupation was confirmed by Ludwik Starski, who recalled that Fethke had always emphasized that his family was Polish.[26] In 1940, the director testified at the notary's office that he had known Starski (a Jew whose real surname was Kałuszyner) since childhood and that the latter is a Georgian. He also helped Starski escape from the ghetto. Another witness ensured that Fethke did not wear a swastika, and he never hurt nor stole from anyone. Jan's brother Edmund

reminded the court that thanks to their older sibling's German citizenship, he and his other brother, both Polish citizens, escaped execution in Bydgoszcz and Gdańsk prisons, where they were incarcerated for political crimes at the outbreak of the war. In addition, Jan Fethke twice, 'with risk to his life', helped obtain a release from Pawiak (a Warsaw political prison) for film producer and director Marian Czauski and for the lawyer Franciszek Godlewski, a former mayor of Warsaw county. 'One should suppose that Jan Fethke also helped in many cases I know nothing about, as he never boasted about such matters', asserted Edmund. The inhabitants of Gromada Wdzydze near Kościerzyna also united to defend the director. His mother, sister, and brother lived there and he himself often visited that area during the occupation, whereby he raised spirits of the local people, arguing that 'Poland, our motherland, will return' and offered financial support, funding humanitarian parcels for prisoners of concentration camps. 'He saved lives of many Poles', ensured the signatories of a written statement.[27]

After he was interrogated on suspicion of collaboration on 27 August 1947, Jan Fethke was provisionally detained and imprisoned. Due to the resourcefulness of his lawyer, who sought to explain this 'tragic misunderstanding' that led to his client becoming a victim of 'irresponsible attacks and personal animosities', the attorney's office received convincing testimonies defending the accused. However, an undoubtedly decisive factor was the intervention of the Minister of Justice, who had familiarized himself with the documentation and—under the *Plenipotentiary for Prosecution of Persons Suspected of Collaboration with Germans*—ordered the investigation to be discontinued. After ten months, in June 1948, Fethke was released due to lack of evidence proving guilt.[28] A secret assessment of his professional work created in 1956 by the *Feature Film Studio* in Łódź offered the following evaluation of Fethke: 'A director of great skill, without artistic aspiration. Suitable for making comedies. Has no ideological stance. Polite and amicable. Does not understand the goals of cinematography due to a lack of ideological stance […] Does not belong to a party, does not participate in political-social life in any way. Cleared by the court from accusations of collaboration. Morality and ethics: no objections raised in the Studio'.[29] In the end, Fethke directed three movies and wrote four scripts for the nationalized Polish cinema before emigrating to West Berlin in 1961, where he died in 1980.

Notes

1. *Express Poranny* 1939, no. 256, p. 2.
2. See Sword, K. (2002) Poland, pp. 695–699 in Dear, I. – Foot, M. R. D. (eds.). *The Oxford Companion to World War II*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
3. Becker, W. (1973) *Film und Herrschaft. Organisationsprinzipien und Organisationsstrukturen der nationalsozialistischen Filmpropaganda*. Berlin: Verlag Volker Spiess, p. 213.
4. Ibid., p. 214.
5. The heads of the *Außestellen* received these standard *Auslandstonwochen* (foreign weekly newsreels) every week and customized them by supplementing local shots. See Vande Winkel, R. (2004) Nazi Newsreels in Europe, 1939–1945: the many faces of Ufa's foreign weekly newsreel (*Auslandstonwoche*) versus German's weekly newsreel (*Deutsche Wochenschau*). *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 24 (1), p. 12.
6. The other four movies were the musical *Żołnierz królowej Madagaskaru* (*The Soldier of the Queen of Madagascar*, 1940) directed by Jerzy Zarzycki, Wanda Jakubowska, and Karol Szołowski; *Żona i nie żona* (*A Wife for them All*, 1941) by Emil Chaberski; *Ja tu rządzę* (*I Am the Boss Here*, 1941) by Mieczysław Krawicz; and *Testament profesora Wilczura* (*Professor Wilczur's Last Will*, 1942) by Leonard Buczkowski.
7. Instytut Pamięci Narodowej (IPN, Institute of National Remembrance), GK (Akta Prokuratora Sądu Okręgowego w Warszawie 1947–1948) 453/1002.
8. Ozimek, S. (1974) *Film polski w wojennej potrzebie*. Warszawa: PIW, p. 144.
9. IPN GK, 453/1002.
10. Kalicki, S. (1941) Dziś i jutro filmu krajowego, p. 6 in *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*, 39.
11. Ozimek (1974), p. 146.
12. *Jutro* 1941, no. 84, p. 3.
13. Hera, J. (1997) Losy aktorów w GG, p. 327 in *Pamiętnik Teatralny*, 1–4 (181–184).
14. *Jutro* 1941, no. 84, p. 3.
15. IPN GK 453/1002.
16. Ibid.
17. *Dziennik Ustaw* 1946, no. 69, item 377, p. 865.
18. When the Polish film industry was nationalized on 13 November 1945, the state company *Film Polski* (Polish Film) was established as the sole entity for producing, distributing, and exhibiting film in Poland. See Haltof, M. (2007), *Historical Dictionary of Polish Cinema*. Lanham – Toronto – Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, p. 24.

19. *Życie Warszawy* 1947, no. 98, p. 4.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. IPN GK 453/1002.
23. *Życie Warszawy* 1947, no. 317, p. 1.
24. IPN GK 453/1002.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. IPN GK 453/1002.
29. IPN BU 1546/57, Fethke Jan Kazimierz, kwestionariusz paszportowy – Biuro Paszportów Zagranicznych.

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CHAPTER 10

Managing Cinemas in German-Annexed Territories: The Case of Heinrich Meisenzahl in Moselle

Anthony Rescigno

Introduction

The republic of France is divided into large administrative regions, which are further divided into departments. The names and boundaries of some of these regions were reformed recently (2014–2016). The present region of Grand Est includes three formerly independent regions in the north east: Alsace, Lorraine, and Champagne-Ardenne. The former regions of Alsace and Lorraine are also known as *Elsaß-Lothringen* in German. The fact that the region also has a German name is not a coincidence: it was once predominantly German-speaking and belonged to the Holy Roman Empire. Therefore, Alsace-Lorraine has for centuries been disputed by France and Germany.

In the aftermath of the French Revolution (1789), Alsace-Lorraine became part of France. It remained French for approximately eighty years, but was annexed by the German Empire after the Franco-Prussian war

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P. Skopal, R. Vande Winkel (eds.), *Film Professionals in Nazi-Occupied Europe*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61634-2_10

(1871). It then remained German for nearly fifty years, but was taken back by France at the end of the First World War (1918). This was formalised in the 1919 Treaty of Versailles. In the Second World War, Germany, not surprisingly, annexed Alsace-Lorraine again. The area became part of the Greater Germanic Reich (*Großgermanisches Reich*) from the summer of 1940 until the gradual retreat of the Wehrmacht and the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1944–1945. At the end of the Second World War, Alsace and Lorraine were attached to France again and are, as mentioned above, still part of the republic.

This chapter focuses on film exhibition in German-ruled Lorraine (1940–1945). The chapter concentrates specifically on the department of Moselle (named after the river that runs through it) and its capital city, Metz, the largest city in the department with around 70,000 inhabitants during the war and which was the city of the Reich with the highest number of cinemagoing per inhabitant in 1943.[1] As a case study into the activities of Heinrich Meisenzahl, a German who was appointed manager of a series of cinemas in Metz, this chapter offers a bottom-up study of the implementation of German film policy in a region that, like the neighbouring Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, was not officially considered occupied, but rather 'brought back into the Reich'.

The analysis in this chapter draws from research on cinema entertainment in Moselle during the Second World War, which consists primarily of (1) the reconstruction of the cinema programmes in Moselle based on contemporary newspapers, (2) a series of interviews conducted with local filmgoers from the time.[2] The results of these interviews suggest that cinemas were not viewed as instruments of propaganda or ideological influence at the local level. On the contrary, as reiterated by the Moselle filmgoers in virtually every interview, the cinema was considered to be a place of pure entertainment, bringing pleasure to viewers and allowing them to forget the troubles of war and annexation. Under the circumstances, filmgoing was considered a relatively cheap pastime. The detailed analysis of the local cinema programmes illustrates that authorities strove to offer entertainment of a high production value throughout the entire territory and to a broad spectrum of venues ranging from the smallest rural cinemas to the largest theatres in the centre of Metz.

Culture, Cinema, and Language in Moselle in the Interwar Years (1918–1940)

After the First World War, the re-annexation of Alsace-Lorraine by the French republic marked the end of nearly fifty years of German rule (Fig. 10.1). Obviously, the cultural and social residue of that period could not be erased quickly. Nevertheless, the French state initiated a process of Francisation and created the '*Service de la Propagande*' for that purpose.[3] This agency was responsible for establishing propaganda strategies through the arts, culture, and entertainment.[4] It considered cinema to be a powerful instrument in the cultural reconquest of the territories.[5] Six vans were utilised as mobile cinemas to drive throughout Moselle and Alsace and offer public screenings in all the territories. Other screenings were also held in theatres. At the film screenings organised by the French propaganda service, it was possible to see French feature films and numerous documentaries that informed the audience about France in various aspects (cultural, geographical, natural, artisanal, or historical). In the 1920s these films were of course silent, with French intertitles. In the beginning of the 1930s, quotas were introduced regarding the screening of German films.[6] The aim was to reduce the presence of German culture, especially in areas where German linguistic influence was still strong.

In 1926, 42% of the 'Mosellans' (inhabitants of Moselle) declared French as their first language. Although only 8% indicated German as their first language, 35% declared primarily speaking the local dialect that is very close to German: Lorraine Franconian, also known as *Plàtt* or *lottrìnger Plàtt*.[7] As these numbers indicate, a significant part of the Mosellans had more affinity with the German language than with the French language.

Internationally, the success of the American film *The Jazz Singer* (1927) marked the beginning of the end for silent films. But the end did not come quickly, because it took several years before sound films were really introduced to European audiences and before the majority of European cinemas had been adapted for projecting sound films. Research into film exhibition in the Moselle regions in the 1930s shows that, after sound films were introduced, audiences preferred films that were spoken in German, particularly in localities that were very close to the German border.[8] This was somewhat embarrassing for the French authorities, because it demonstrated that the French government policy of Francisation had not been very effective. The government decided to allow a percentage of German films for each cinema of Moselle, according to the preferences of

DER
GROSSE
KÖNIG
EIN VEIT HARLAN-FILM DER
TOBIS
mit OTTO GEBÜHR · KRISTINA SÖDERBAUM · GUSTAV FRÖHLICH
HANS NIELSEN · PAUL WEGENER · PAUL HENCKELS
ELISABETH FLICKENSCHILDT · HILDE KÖRBER UVA.
BUCH UND REGIE: VEIT HARLAN
MUSIK: H.O. BORGMANN · BILD: BRUNO MONDI · BAU: ZANDER u. MACHUS · HERSTELLUNGSLTG.: W. WIESNER

Fig. 10.1 German poster for *Der große König* (*The Great King*, 1942), a film about Frederick the Great. (The William Gillespie Collection, Sydney (https://germanfilms.net/))

the local audience for French or German movies, or both of them. For example, some cinemas were allowed to programme 90% of German films whereas others located far from the frontier didn't show German films at all.[9] The observation of the percentage of German films indicates a slow decrease in preference for them in correlation with the decline of the use of the German throughout the 1930s. However, German films still remained popular.

World War II and 'Germanisation' (1940–1945)

In the summer of 1940, following the defeat of French troops, Nazi Germany annexed the provinces of Alsace-Lorraine. The department of Moselle, located in Lorraine, was also annexed and transformed into a German administrative unit, called the *Chef der Zivilverwaltung Gebiet Lothringen* (Territory of the Chief of Civil Administration of Lorraine – *CdZ Lothringen*), which, as the name indicates, was governed by a civil administration. As a new part of the German Reich, *CdZ Lothringen* was added to a larger administrative division: the *Gau Saarpfalz*, which was renamed to the *Gau Westmark* in December 1940. (The administrative subdivisions of the German Reich into *Gaue* corresponded to the subdivision of the Nazi party into analogous *Gaue*: it is a clear example of the way in which the German state and the National-Socialist Party were intertwined in 1933–1945).

The leader of both the *CdZ Lothringen* and the *Gau Westmark* was Josef Bürckel, member of the NSDAP and the SS. Bürckel was a bureaucrat who held various titles and offices (e.g. *Gauleiter*, *Reichsstatthalter*). In practical terms, Bürckel was the governor of the annexed department of Moselle and in this position, he did his utmost to Germanise the region.[10] The concept of 'Germanisation' (*Germanisierung* or *Eindeutschung*) was understood as the process of increasing and fortifying the German language, culture, and population by any and all possible means; and was, of course, intended to go hand in hand with Nazification.

The inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine expressed dismay and bitterness at being annexed again by Germany. The previous annexation (1871–1918) had never required submission to an authoritarian regime the way it did in 1940. For example: in 1871, the inhabitants were given the choice between staying and becoming citizens of the German empire, or leaving the territory (and consequently 45,000 left). By contrast, in the summer of 1940, within a matter of hours, 200,000 inhabitants who were deemed

'too French', were not given any choice, but evicted outright and told to leave for France immediately.[11] Since it was now considered part of the Greater Germanic Reich, only the use of the German language was permitted. Similar to what was happening in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, everything was forcibly Germanised: the names of streets, the names of cities, and even the names of inhabitants. Statues in honour of French persons were torn down, and inscriptions paying homage to the French homeland were removed.[12] French language and culture were rapidly outlawed.

Thus, Lorraine, with its natural richness of coking coal (a.k.a. metallurgical coal), which was very important for the German armaments industry, was now in the hands of inhabitants who predominantly spoke German.

Moselle Cinemas Under Germanisation

Wehrmacht soldiers arrived in Metz on 14 June 1940. Eight days later—as French officials were still negotiating the conditions of an armistice—the new, temporarily appointed German military authority ordered the immediate reopening of two cinemas in the city: *Rex* and *Gloria*. It is not clear which films these cinemas were screening during those first days and weeks, but it seems safe to assume that German films were chosen. From 2 July onwards, local newspapers were available again, in Germanised form. Under the control of the Nazi authorities, two newspapers appeared during the annexation: the *NSZ Westmark* (which was called the *Deutsche Front* until December 1940) and the *Metzer Zeitung*.[13] Until the end of the war, these newspapers printed overviews of the films being screened in local cinemas. These sources thus allow us to reconstruct the programmes that cinemas were running. Not surprisingly, all films on the cinema programmes were in German, or with German subtitles, and no French, American, or British movies were screened in Metz. In other cities in the department of Moselle, the reopening of cinemas also occurred swiftly, except for the so-called 'red zone' (*zone rouge*), which had been evacuated in September 1939 and to which the original inhabitants were not allowed to return. The 'red zone' designates the area between the Maginot Line and the German border. Its evacuation affected approximately 200,000 people from 214 different cities and villages.[14]

Eventually, forty-two cinemas would be operating in the Moselle department between 1940 and 1944—only half as many as before the war. Several purpose-built cinemas remained closed throughout the war, while

many non-cinemas that had previously projected films (i.e. cafés, parish halls, etc.) were allowed to resume other activities, but were no longer permitted to function as venues for film screening. Since the area was now part of the German Reich, the German legislation governing cinema entertainment also applied here. This meant that feature films were now divided into three categories. Some films were deemed fit for all audiences, but some films were forbidden for anyone who was younger than fourteen or eighteen years old. The double bill (two feature films in one programme) that had been a standard practice in France, was no longer allowed. Henceforth, film programmes had to follow the same format as in the rest of the Reich (Fig. 10.2): a newsreel (*Die deutsche Wochenschau*, identical to the version screened in Nazi Germany) followed by a short documentary (*Kulturfilm*) and a main feature film. Almost nine out of ten films screened in annexed Moselle had been produced in Germany (which at that time also included Austria, annexed in 1938). The remainder were Italian films as well as a few productions made by German allies. French films were entirely forbidden. Even the French *Continental* productions that were shown elsewhere in the Third Reich—not in French, but in German dubbed format—were not screened in the Moselle region. The strong presence of German films does not seem to have deterred cinema-goers. Of course, one has to take into account that, given the cultural proximity of Moselle to Germany due to recent historical developments, notably the annexation of the department from 1871 to 1918, it was culturally acceptable for Moselle inhabitants to watch German films.

It goes without saying that the German authorities were very interested in controlling the cinemas. This can, for instance, be deduced from the activities of the *CdZ Lothringen*, and more specifically, the work of its department dedicated to culture (called *K* as an abbreviation of *Kultur*), which was organised under *Abteilung 1* (Section 1).[15] On 12 July 1940, department head Rudolf Trampler sent a letter to *Gauleiter* Bürckel regarding the control of cinemas in 'German Lorraine'.[16] He mentioned that the current head of the *Gaufilmstelle* (Regional Film Office) and the *Reichsfilmkammer von Saarpfalz* (Reich Chamber of Film for Saarpfalz), Heinz Frey, was now in charge of any issues relating to 'film propaganda' in Lorraine. This letter therefore attests to the takeover of all film activities in the annexed territories by the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Worker Party, NSDAP). The speed of this announcement in the early days of the annexation and the letter's uncompromising tone demonstrate that the use of cinema for

Fig. 10.2 An advertisement for four cinemas in Metz (13 February 1941). The advertisement clearly shows that the cinemas combine the feature film with the German newsreel (*Deutsche Wochenschau*) and a documentary short film (*Kulturfilm*). All feature films are German-language productions. From left to right: the comedy *Quax, der Bruchpilot* (*Quax the Crash Pilot*, 1941), the drama *Seitensprünge* (*Escapades*, 1940), the German-Italian co-production *Premiere der Butterfly* (*The Dream of Butterfly*, 1939), and the propaganda film *Spähtrupp Hallgarten* (*Hallgarten Patrol*, 1941). Minors are not allowed to see *Escapades* or *The Dream of Butterfly*. Screenings of the other two films, which both focus on the German military forces (albeit in a different way), are open to everyone. (Anthony Rescigno private collection)

propaganda purposes was central to the Nazi Party. By the same logic, a directive from the *CdZ Lothringen* dated 10 October 1940 stated that the cinemas in Metz had to be run by individuals who were recognised for their professional and political reliability.[17] In October 1940, the *Kreisleiter*[18] (County Leader) of Ludwigshafen wrote to the mayor of Metz, Karl Kleemann, to recommend his son-in-law to manage one of the

city's cinemas.[19] However, most cinemas seem to have remained financially in the hands of their original, pre-war owners, as can be deduced from a comparison of the officially published cinema directory for the region from 1942 with a pre-war list.[20] A possible explanation for this phenomenon is that there was no need to be the director of a cinema in order to check its programming. Every cinema owner in Moselle had to follow the German film legislation (concerning the composition of the film programme) and had to work with German film distributors and with the products they were offering. That seems to have been sufficient.

Lothringer Lichtspieltheater: The Birth of a Local Cinema Network

The above-mentioned cinema directory, which lists all the cinemas that were active in the regions of Frankfurt and Southern Germany, including *Elsaß-Lothringen*, mentions the names of five venues (*Rex*, *Gloria* [named *Vox* before 1942], *Palast*, *Kammer*, and *Skala*) that were managed by the *CdZ Lothringen*, in other words by the German authorities.[21] All of these cinemas were located in Metz which had six cinemas in total.

This politicised management of cinemas was accentuated in 1943. Apparently, there was a need to make the takeover of these cinemas by *CdZ Lothringen* official and to facilitate their management. In early 1943, talks were initiated between this administration and the municipality of Metz about creating a limited company to manage a network of these five cinemas in Metz, and possibly some other cinemas in Moselle as well.[22] In a note on the development of this future cinema network to be known as *Lothringer Lichtspieltheater* (*Lorraine Cinemas*), we can read: 'According to the instructions of the *Gauleiter*, the cinemas in Lorraine should be given an important cultural role; it is therefore necessary to manage the cinemas, currently subject to the influence of hostile parties, in the form of a company, in which the head of the civil administration has an exclusive influence'.[23] This also involved 'securing the revenue of the cultural sector in Lorraine in order to redistribute it to the local cultural sector', thereby 'ensuring the availability of funds to update material and invest in existing structures.'[24] The takeover of all these cinemas responded to a 'need to replace the previous managers', because they had been evicted 'on account of their Francophilia' or because of a 'foreign' influence within the structures of the cinemas.[25] Unfortunately, it has so far not been possible to

find more information about the takeover of these cinemas. Therefore, it remains unclear if, for instance, some of the original owners were of Jewish origin and therefore robbed from their rightful property (although there are some indications to suggest that this was indeed the case). It is also possible that the owners were just considered too loyal to France.

Another working document written in April 1943 by a certain Helmolt sought 'clarification' about the owners of several cinemas that were to be integrated into the future company. By this time, the discussions were about twelve different cinemas. This applied to the *Gloria* cinema in Metz, which was owned by a company called *Bloch-Roubach* (the surname Bloch might hint at Jewish origins). According to the German authorities, this cinema was 100% 'enemy property', meaning that it needed to be seized and incorporated into the future network. The future administrators who were appointed by local politicians also questioned the status of other cinemas elsewhere in the department, outside Metz, namely in the cities of Thionville, Forbach, and Moyeuvre. The documents show that some of the future cinemas of the *Lothringer Lichtspieltheater* were not considered to be in 'enemy' hands (e.g. the *Vox* in Forbach owned by the *Brasserie de l'Union messine*) or only 'half' so (e.g. the *Skala* in Thionville).[26] The takeover of the other cinemas was simplified by the effective absence of their owner. In Moyeuvre, for example, the 'Gentil' owners of one cinema had 'emigrated'[27] (*abgewandert*) to France, allowing it to be taken over by the *Lothringer Lichtspieltheater*. Eventually, the limited company would control eleven cinemas: five in the centre of Metz, two in Thionville, two in Forbach, one in Moyeuvre, and one in L'Hôpital. This newly created network of cinemas counted just over 7100 seats and featured 195 screenings each week.

On 12 June 1943, the company known as the *Lothringer Lichtspieltheater* was officially created.[28] The constitutive deed was signed at the Metz town hall in the presence of governor Josef Bürckel, his financial advisor (*Ministerialrat* in charge of financial tasks Dr. Hans Georg Dahlgrün), a local notary (Eduard Cropsal), and Franz Schubert, the mayor of Metz and *Kreisleiter* of the NSDAP (note, the combination of these two offices demonstrates again the total integration of public offices and Nazi party functions). The company statutes specify that it was created to operate cinemas that had been identified as enemy property in Lorraine. They also mentioned that the company was funded by public capital: 120,000 *Reichsmarks* had been provided by the *CdZ Lothringen* and 80,000 *Reichsmarks* by the city of Metz. The company was controlled by a board

of directors that included the above-mentioned *Ministerialrat* Dr. Hans Georg Dahlgrün together with representatives of the city administrations of Metz (Dr. Werner Hahn and Dr. Erich Buchmann) and Saarbrücken (Karl Mages and Dr. Karl Koob). In this way, this new cinema network was placed under the direct control of the highest local political-administrative bodies.

The purposes of this company were manifold. For one, it needed to ensure that cinema attendance remained high, in other words, it had to continue showing films that met the expectations and tastes of local audiences. At the same time, the screening of German films was necessary to maintain cultural hegemony and facilitate the process of Germanisation, to which Mosellans were subjected. To fulfil these tasks, the new company needed a skilled manager to oversee these eleven cinemas.

Heinrich Meisenzahl, the Right Man for the Job

On 18 June 1943, the mayor of Metz contacted the Film Office of the *Gaupropagandaleitung* (*Gau* Propaganda Department) of the *Gau Westmark* inquiring about the nomination of a director for the *Lothringer Lichtspieltheater*.[29] A week later, he received a response from a certain Julius Bantleon in the Film Office, who put forward the name of the then interim manager of the five Metz cinemas: Heinrich Meinsenzahl.[30] Bantleon wrote, 'I can only recommend the current manager of the five cinemas in Metz, Mr. Meisenzahl, since such a job can only be done by an experienced professional, who also understands the business practices of the cinema industry. Mr. Meisenzahl undoubtedly has the professional and business skills required'.[31] Meisenzahl was of German origin. He was born in Frankfurt am Main on 28 November 1897 and he arrived in Moselle well before the start of the Second World War. With this fact in mind, Bantleon noted that he did not doubt his candidate's political loyalty, 'even if we must take into account that Mr. Meisenzahl lived in Lorraine well before 1939.' In the wake of this remark, the municipality of Metz requested a political assessment (*politische Beurteilung*) of the future director from the NSDAP. On 28 June 1943, the Head of Department of the Regional Staff (*Kreisstabsamtsleiter*) of Metz responded that Heinrich Meisenzahl, said to be the *Kreisfilmstellenleiter der Kreisleitung Metz-Stadt der NSDAP*, was politically reliable.[32]

Consequently, Heinrich Meisenzahl was hired as director of *Lothringer Lichtspieltheater* (Fig. 10.3). He signed a three-year contract, but

Fig. 10.3 Heinrich Meisenzahl's business card, preserved in the archives. (Metz City Archives)

ultimately only completed half of this term, because the liberation of Moselle in late 1944 put an end to his professional activities. His monthly salary was 1200 *Reichsmarks* paid in cash—a rather large sum compared to the known salaries at the time.[33] Although his political allegiance was an assurance of loyalty, Meisenzahl was principally chosen because of his experience in the cinema industry and his knowledge of the 'local context'. Nevertheless, little is known about his activities prior to 1943. The record shows that Heinrich Meisenzahl had become the interim manager of the five Metz cinemas in early 1943, even though the theatres still belonged to private companies. Otherwise, local business records have no trace of this man.[34] To verify the success of Meisenzahl's cultural strategy, we need only consult the results of the Metz cinemas following the creation of the *Lothringer Lichtspieltheater*. Just because cinemas were under the control of the authorities does not mean that their operators did not also benefit from improving the quality of their programming. Thus, it was their goal to develop a programme that as best as possible met the expectations and tastes of local spectators, for example, by scheduling a film with a star who has already had success at the local level or focusing on a genre of film that is sure to fill the cinemas.

1943/1944: A Successful Season

We lack precise statistics on the financial results of Moselle cinemas during the first stage of the annexation. The internal documents of the *Lothringer Lichtspieltheater* indicate that the number of tickets sold in the eleven theatres increased by 17% between 1942 and 1943 (3,340,000 and 3,898,000 tickets, respectively). Between September 1943 and April 1944, an average of 6,000 tickets were sold daily at the five cinemas in Metz. Going to the cinema was thus a popular leisure activity that attracted large crowds. In the financial report for the year 1943, Heinrich Meisenzahl explained this growth as the result of improved distribution of films in Moselle and faster delivery times for new films.[35] Meisenzahl also stated that the increase of 0.15 *Reichsmarks* for film ticket prices, which had been imposed on all cinemas in the network to fund the 'highly controversial' reconstruction of Moselle, had no impact on sales.[36]

Cinema attendance and the demand for tickets seems to have been so high that the management of *Lothringer Lichtspieltheater* implemented a new system to allow customers to reserve their tickets in advance. In fact, the long queues that formed in front of the theatres had given rise to several problems. Filmgoers had been forced to wait outside for lengthy periods of time, without the guarantee that they would be able to purchase a ticket. Consequently a publicity campaign appeared in the local press that emphasised the exasperation felt by Metz inhabitants when they could not gain admission to the film that they had come to see and demanded that something be done to rectify the situation.[37] Consequently, starting on 3 November 1943, spectators wishing to attend a screening at the *Rex* in Metz, the city's most exclusive cinema and also the largest in Moselle with 1,169 seats, could telephone or visit the ticket booth between 10 am and 1 pm daily to reserve a seat for the session of their choice.[38] This type of organisation can be understood as a consequence of the great success of the cinemas, notably in 1943. The *Rex* alone sold 208,222 tickets between September and November 1943.[39] The introduction of the reservation system was accompanied by a new measure: a ban on entering the theatre after the beginning of screening so as not to disturb the seated viewers. Often understood as a way of compelling filmgoers to view the entire session, including the German newsreel, this decision was instead presented as a guarantee of comfort and quality so that the spectators would not be disturbed by late arrivals.

Programming Centred on Popular Films

Heinrich Meisenzahl continued to reinforce the cinematic policy that had existed in Moselle since the start of the annexation by promoting popular, apolitical films rather than propaganda films. The most virulent Germans films from an ideological perspective were rarely scheduled, as they had little appeal to local audiences. This applied, for instance, to *Kameraden auf See* (Comrades at Sea, 1938), *Hitlerjunge Quex* (Hitler Youth Quex, 1933), and *Pour le mérite* (1938). Nevertheless, all the major propaganda films were indeed screened in Moselle, although their presence on the local market was quite small. There were two reasons for this: they were shown in few cinemas (mostly in Metz and Thionville), and they were rarely rescreened. Meisenzahl, like every cinema manager, had to stay in touch with the tastes of his customers and would not prolong or re-program films that were not popular.

Those films that were commissioned by the German state (*Staatsauftragsfilme*) are an interesting indicator of this local trend.[40] Among the thirty films with the most screening days in Metz and Thionville during the annexation, only a few correspond to the ninety-six films identified as having been ordered by members of the Nazi government. The most successful film of this type in Metz was *Sieben Jahre Pech* (Seven Years of Hard Luck, 1940), a comedy starring Hans Moser and Wolf Albach-Retty. It was re-programmed five times, with a total of forty-five screening days. In Thionville, the most screened film was *Die goldene Stadt* (The Golden City, 1942) (Fig. 10.4) which ran for a total of twenty-eight days. *Der große König* (The Great King, 1942) was shown for twenty-five days in Metz and seven in Thionville.

In 1941, *Ohm Krüger* (Uncle Krüger, 1941), Hans Steinhoff's film about the Boer War, was heavily promoted in the local press in the months preceding its release. The film was exclusively screened at the *Rex* in Metz and the *Skala* in Thionville. After seven days of screening, the usual duration for a new film in these two cities, the local press indicated that both cinemas would continue showing the film for another four days. Subsequently, this so-called 'super production' was no longer screened at Thionville and only shown once in Metz over a period of eleven days. *Uncle Krüger* was ranked in 93rd position of the most screened films in Metz, and 124th in Thionville.[41] However, Hans Steinhoff's film was not the only state-commissioned film that did not appeal to spectators in the annexed territories. *Bismarck* (1940) was likewise widely promoted in the

Fig. 10.4 German poster for the film *Die goldene Stadt* (*The Golden City*, 1942) an anti-Czech colour film directed by Veit Harlan and starring Kristina Söderbaum. (The William Gillespie Collection, Sydney (https://germanfilms.net/))

Moselle press in late 1940, but was only screened for fourteen days in Metz and seven in Thionville. In 1941, *Heimkehr* (Homecoming, 1940) was shown for twenty-two days in Metz and eight in Thionville and only re-programmed a second time in these two cities (for eleven days in Metz and one in Thionville). The majority of state-commissioned films disappeared almost entirely from Moselle screens in 1943 and the first half of 1944, the prosperous period when Heinrich Meisenzahl headed the *Lothringer Lichtspieltheater*. Only from June 1944 on did propaganda films truly re-emerge after almost completely disappearing from the market for more than two years. This was the case, for example, with *Jud Süß* (Jew Suess, 1940), which was reprised repeatedly throughout Moselle in the summer of 1944, three years after its last local screening in July 1941. The anti-Semitic comedy *Robert und Bertram* (Robert and Bertram, 1939), which had only had minimal local screenings, also returned in the summer of 1944. The reprise of these films could be interpreted as part of

an ideological hardening following the Allied victories, notably the Normandy landings, which resulted in a more virulent programming of propaganda films than in the previous months. Nevertheless, the return of these propaganda films is relative, since the cinemas continued to run entertainment films for the most part. The most screened film during the summer of 1944 was *Immensee* (1943), a colour melodrama made by Veit Harlan with Kristina Söderbaum and Carl Raddatz, which ran for twenty-one days at the *Rex* in Metz in August 1944.

When looking at these dates, we must not forget the physical presence of German soldiers. Historically, Metz, located between two rivers (Moselle and Seille) and lying in internationally disputed territory, had always been a strategically important city. Consequently, the city hosted a lot of soldiers in its history. Fortified belts and military barracks had been constructed around the city in the nineteenth century both by the French and by the Germans. During the Second World War, many German soldiers were stationed in the city—who would fiercely fight the American troops in September–December 1944. According to Heinrich Meisenzahl, they accounted for 40% of all ticket sales in the *Lothringer Lichtspieltheater* network in 1943 and probably in a similar proportion in the cinemas of Metz.[42] Indeed, even though the garrison status of the city of Metz implied the presence of many soldiers, there was no *Soldatenkino* (soldiers' cinema) in all of Moselle. This would partly explain why the city had the highest number of annual cinemagoing per inhabitant within the entire Third Reich.[43] There is some evidence that the strong military presence played a role in the choice of cinema programmes in Moselle, notably in Metz, for example in the programming of a particular type of German film that Pierre Cadars and Francis Courtade have called *films de permissionnaires* (films about soldiers on leave).[44] These films narrate the journey of one or more soldiers on leave and their reunion with loved ones. Mostly produced after the start of the Second World War, they belong to different film genres, from comedy to melodrama. The first or second releases of these films were often programmed in Metz during festive periods, for example: *Zwei in einer grossen Stadt* (Two in a Big City, 1942) screened at the *Rex* for Easter 1942 (Fig. 10.5) and then at the *Kammer* for Christmas that same year; *6 Tage Heimaturlaub* (Six Days of Home Leave, 1941) was scheduled at the *Rex* on 27 December 1941; and the second screening of *Die grosse Liebe* (The Great Love, 1942) was programmed for twenty-two days at the *Skala* in Metz. These films about soldiers on leave were screened more frequently during festive periods so that the German

Die grosse Liebe
EIN UFA-FILM MIT ZARAH LEANDER
VIKTOR STAAL · PAUL HÖRBIGER
GRETHE WEISER · HANS SCHWARZ JUN.
IDEE: ALEXANDER LERNET-HOLENIA · DREHBUCH: PETER GROLL UND ROLF HANSEN · MUSIK: MICHAEL JARY
HERSTELLUNGSGRUPPE: WALTER BOLZ · SPIELLEITUNG: ROLF HANSEN
KARNATH

Fig. 10.5 German poster for *Die große Liebe* (*The Great* Love, 1942), starring the famous Swedish actress and singer Zarah Leander. (The William Gillespie Collection, Sydney (https://germanfilms.net/))

soldiers could indirectly experience the feelings of reunion at a time when they longed for the company of their family. Yet these films did not only target soldiers yearning for their *Heimatland*. They could also be appreciated by local Moselle audiences, who were also affected by wartime separation.[45] This programming of a certain type of film, which was partly designed to respond to the expectations of soldiers, did not exclude other filmgoers, as such films were open to diverse interpretations depending on their reception by different viewers.

Conclusion

This study on the management of cinemas in Moselle by the political authorities during the Second World War shows that their approach to the local market and their programming of films was to strike a balance between the tastes of all the different publics present in Metz (local inhabitants, German soldiers, German settlers) and the Nazi state's project to Germanise the area. Employing someone, who had knowledge of the local film market in Moselle and was thus competent to organise cinema screenings, reflects a willingness to retain the perception among annexed filmgoers of cinemas as a space for pleasant pastime, far removed from ideological and political tensions outside in the 'real world'. Political interventions in the programming of films were therefore quite limited, except for the prohibition of *Continental* films. Only the military turning point in the summer of 1944 seems to have led to the return of certain propaganda films to Moselle screens. (To test this hypothesis, however, would require data on film screenings in 'other' German cities.)

Nevertheless, cinemas in Moselle were not completely free of political films, even though cinema managers took great care not to choose productions that would not be of interest to filmgoers. According to the interviews and the analysis of the local market, local audiences did not enjoy the major propaganda films despite the presence of many Germanophiles among them and the effort of the political authorities to promote these films. Yet the reasons for the unpopularity of these films are not necessarily political: perhaps they simply did not correspond to the expectations and tastes of the majority of viewers. The tables listing top films in Metz and Thionville, presented in the appendix, show how the type of films varies from city to city. Films with powerful ideological content were more prevalent in Thionville. This suggests, for example, that Metz's cinemas were more mixed, in terms of audiences, than those in

Thionville, where there were also many garrisons. By contrast, these tables help us to identify the main criteria desired by both local audiences: stars and entertainment films (comedies, musicals, and well-made melodramas). The presence of famous stars like Zarah Leander, Wolf Albach-Retty, and Marika Rökk was often sufficient to attract crowds. *The Great Love*, which starred Zarah Leander, was the second most screened film in Metz during the course of the war and played for a total of forty-one days. Yet, the success of this landmark film of Nazi cinema depended on these criteria, which the local cinema director took into account by balancing the expectations of local audiences and the needs of distraction from the war for the *Wehrmacht* soldiers.

Although we are unable to confirm the specifics of the local strategy for the programming of films, we can attest to the successful organisation of the local programme, as it attracted a range of different audiences to the cinema despite the political context and the convergence of filmgoers opposed in all respects bar their shared pleasure of seeing a good film. The mass attendance of cinemas in Metz resulted from the fine balance of the cinematic programmes as well as the watchful eye of Heinrich Meisenzahl, a man who left no trace in history and whose post-war fate remains unknown.

Annex 10.1 Top 30 Films in Metz

	Film	*Days*	*Screenings*	*Number of programmes*
1	*Sieben Jahre Pech* (Seven Years of Hard Luck, 1940)	45	140	6
2	*Die große Liebe* (The Great Love, 1942)	43	123	3
3	*Die goldene Stadt* (The Golden City, 1942)	41	122	3
4	*Wiener Blut* (Vienna Blood, 1942)	40	121	3
5	*Frauen sind doch bessere Diplomaten* (Women Are Better Diplomats, 1940)	38	106	3
6	*Venus vor Gericht* (Venus On Trial, 1941)	37	111	4
7	*Heimat* (1938)	36	108	4
8	*Das große Spiel* (The Big Game, 1942)	35	101	3
9	*Quax, der Bruchpilot* (Quax the Crash Pilot, 1941)	35	100	3
10	*Die Kellnerin Anna* (Anna, the Waitress, 1941)	35	92	6

	Film	*Days*	*Screenings*	*Number of programmes*
11	*Auf Wiederseh'n, Franziska!* (Goodbye Franziska, 1940)	34	102	4
12	*Liebe streng verboten!* (Love Strictly Forbidden, 1939)	34	101	4
13	*Tanz mit dem Kaiser* (Dance with the Emperor, 1941)	34	93	3
14	*Liebesgeschichten* (Love Stories, 1943)	34	90	4
15	*... reitet für Deutschland* (Riding for Germany, 1941)	32	101	4
16	*Jud Süß* (Jew Suess, 1940)	32	95	4
17	*Gefährtin meines Sommers* (My Summer's Companion, 1943)	32	90	3
18	*Die lustigen Vagabunden* (The Merry Vagabonds, 1940)	31	97	3
19	*Damals* (Back Then, 1943)	31	93	2
20	*Wen die Götter lieben* (Whom the Gods Love, 1942)	31	89	3
21	*Herzensfreud – Herzensleid* (Joy and Sorrow, 1940)	31	89	4
22	*Wir machen Musik* (We Make Music, 1942)	31	82	3
23	*Premiere der Butterfly* (The Dream of Butterfly, 1939)	30	90	6
24	*Rote Mühle* (The Red Mill, 1939)	30	89	4
25	*Falstaff in Wien* (Falstaff in Vienna, 1940)	30	86	4
26	*Sieben Jahre Glück* (Seven Years of Good Luck, 1942)	30	86	3
27	*Einmal der liebe Herrgott sein* (To Be the Boss for Once, 1942)	30	81	4
28	*Hab' mich lieb!* (Love me, 1942)	30	79	3
29	*L'Assedio dell'Alcazar* (The Siege Of Alcazar, 1940)	29	90	3
30	*Der verkaufte Großvater* (The Sold Grandfather, 1942)	29	83	3

Annex 10.2 Top 30 Films in Thionville

	Film	*Days*	*Screenings*	*Number of Programmes*
1	*Die goldene Stadt* (The Golden City, 1942)	28	86	2
2	*Sieben Jahre Pech* (Seven Years of Hard Luck, 1940)	25	48	3
3	*Fronttheater* (1942)	24	74	2
4	*Hab' mich lieb!* (Love me, 1942)	24	74	2
5	*Die große Nummer* (The Big Act, 1943)	24	73	2
6	*Die große Liebe* (The Great Love, 1942)	24	73	2
7	*Sieben Jahre Glück* (Seven Years of Good Luck, 1942)	23	70	2
8	*Jud Süß* (Jew Suess, 1940)	21	66	3
9	*Vertigine – Tragödie einer Liebe* (Broken Love, 1941)	21	66	2
10	*... reitet für Deutschland* (Riding for Germany, 1941)	21	65	3
11	*U-Boote westwärts!* (U-Boat, Course West!, 1941)	21	64	3
12	*Violanta* (1942)	21	64	2
13	*Die Entlassung* (The Dismissal, 1942)	20	62	2
14	*Wen die Götter lieben* (Whom the Gods Love, 1942)	19	58	3
15	*Das große Spiel* (The Big Game, 1942)	18	66	2
16	*Dein Leben gehört mir* (Your Life is Mine, 1939)	18	66	2
17	*Dr. Crippen an Bord* (Doctor Crippen, 1942)	18	57	2
18	*Am Abend auf der Heide* (Evening on the Heath, 1941)	18	57	2
19	*Die lustigen Vagabunden* (The Merry Vagabonds, 1940)	18	57	2
20	*Trenck, der Pandur* (Trenck, Officer of the Pandurs, 1940)	18	57	2
21	*Sein Sohn* (His Son, 1942)	18	57	2
22	*L'Assedio dell'Alcazar* (The Siege Of Alcazar, 1940)	18	56	2
23	*Kleine Residenz* (The Little Residence, 1942)	18	56	2
24	*Der Weg ins Freie* (The Way to Freedom, 1941)	18	55	2
25	*6 Tage Heimaturlaub* (Six Days of Home Leave, 1941)	18	55	3
26	*Die Kellnerin Anna* (Anna, the Waitress, 1941)	18	55	2
27	*Schicksal* (Destiny, 1942)	18	55	2

	Film	*Days*	*Screenings*	*Number of Programmes*
28	*Vom Schicksal verweht* (Gone with Fate, 1942)	18	55	2
29	*Tanz mit dem Kaiser* (Dance with the Emperor, 1941)	18	54	2
30	*Nanette* (1940)	18	53	2

Notes

1. (1945) *Zahlen Zur Deutschen Filmwirtschaft 1939–1944*, Berlin, Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung, « Tabelle 46 ».
2. Rescigno, A. (2017), *Les films allemands en Moselle annexée par l'Allemagne nazie (1940–1945): histoire d'un plaisir oublié*. PhD Thesis. Lorraine: Université de Lorraine. Eleven interviews were conducted: six one-on-one interviews and five group interviews, whereby a total of twenty people testified to their experiences of annexation cinema, some of them twice. The interviewees were born between 1925 and 1933.
3. Gozillon-Fronsacq, O. (1996) Le cinéma en Alsace après 1918: son utilisation politique, pp. 46–58 in *1895, revue d'histoire du cinéma*, 20.
4. Archives départementales de la Moselle (ADM) 14 T 49.
5. Cieslik, V. (2001) *Le Cinéma en Moselle dans l'entre-deux-guerres, 1919–1939*. Metz: Université de Metz (unpublished MA thesis), p. 147.
6. ADM 24 Z 1: Lettre du sous-secrétaire d'État à la présidence du conseil à Monsieur le Haut-Commissaire de la République à Strasbourg datée du 10 décembre 1918. Cited by Cieslik (2001), p. 147.
7. Laumesfeld, D (1988) Esquisse du multilinguisme mosellan: langues et cultures régionales/immigrées et ouvrières/paysannes, pp. 33–51 in *Langage et société*, 44.
8. Le Moal-Piltzing, P. (2005) « La censure française du cinéma allemand en Alsace-Lorraine, pp. 387–404 in Benay J. Leveratto J-M Culture et histoire des spectacle en Alsace et en Lorraine: de l'annexion à la décentralisation (1871–1946). Bern: Lang.
9. République Française, « Décret relatif à la projection des films cinématographiques dans les départements du Bas-Rhin, du Haut-Rhin et de la Moselle ». *Journal officiel*, 10 juillet 1934, p. 6947.
10. Muskalla, D. (1995), *NS-Politik an der Saar unter Josef Bürckel. Gleichschaltung – Neuordnung – Verwaltung*. Saarbrücken: Kommission für Saarländische Landesgeschichte und Volksforschung.

11. Foot, M.R.D. (2001) Alsace-Lorraine in Dear, pp. 22–23 in I.C.B & Foot, M.R.D. (eds) *The Oxford Companion to World War II*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
12. About the processes of Germanisation, see, Wolfanger D. (1982), La nazification de la Lorraine mosellane. Sarreguemines: Pierron.
13. Also known as *Neue Metzer Zeitung*, *Metzer Zeitung am Abend*, and *Metzer Zeitung*.
14. Hiegel, H. (1983) « L'évacuation de la zone rouge du département de la Moselle en 1939–1940 vers les Charentes et la Vienne », pp.57–59, Académie nationale de Metz.
15. ADM 1W1.
16. ADM 1W1.
17. AMM 2 Z 30.
18. The *Kreisleiter* was a Nazi party official in charge of surveillance within a communal district.
19. AMM 2 Z 30.
20. *Reichs-Kino Adressbuch 1942: Frankfurt – Südwestdeutschland* (1942). Berlin: Dr Buhrbanck & Co, pp. 353–356. The pre-war list is published in: Stotzky, P. (2005), *Le cinéma en Moselle: naissance et développement d'un loisir de masse (1908–1939)*, Metz: Université de Metz (unpublished MA thesis).
21. *Reichs-Kino Adressbuch 1942: Frankfurt – Südwestdeutschland* (1942). Berlin: Dr Buhrbanck & Co, pp. 353–356.
22. There were talks about also including a cinema in Alsace, but that idea was eventually abandoned.
23. AMM 2 Z 30, « Aus dem Akt "Société Immobilière Serpenoise" der Ueberleitungsstelle Lothringen – Denkschrift», 29 March 1943.
24. AMM 2 Z 30.
25. AMM 2 Z 30 « Aus dem Akt "Société Immobilière Serpenoise" der Ueberleitungsstelle Lothringen – Abdruck», 7 April 1943.
26. AMM 2 Z 30 « Aus dem Akt "Société Immobilière Serpenoise" der Ueberleitungsstelle Lothringen – Abdruck», 7 April 1943.
27. The subtlety of the German term does not indicate whether it is a voluntary departure or an administrative expulsion.
28. AMM 2 Z 30.
29. AMM 2 Z 30. Letter from Julius Bantleon to the mayor of Metz.
30. Julius Bantleon was manager of the Tonbild-Theater of Speyer in Rheinland-Pfalz from 1917 to 1926; his mother Sofia Bantleon was co-manager. See Weber K., 'Speyer Tonbild-Theater' [http://www.allekinos.com/SPEYERTonbild.htm]
31. AMM 2 Z 30. Letter from Julius Bantleon to the mayor of Metz.
32. AMM 2 Z 30.

33. The civil administration made a considerable effort to propose attractive salaries to German settlers. At the time, the average weekly salary of employees was 197 *Reichsmarks*, which amounted to around 788 *Reichsmarks* per month. Erbs, L. (2013) Échelles et territoires du salaire en Moselle au tournant des années 1944–1948, pp. 243–274 in *Histoire & mesure*, 28 (2).
34. We only find that a so-called Jean Guillaume Henri Meisenzahl married in Metz in October 1934, but we are not sure that is the same man. AMM 1E/e43.
35. AMM 2 Z 30, 'Abschluss – Bilanz 1943'.
36. This was a mandatory tax contribution to finance the reconstruction of places or areas that had been damaged in 1939–1940. The contribution was 10 Pfennige. After 1 October 1943, the contribution was increased to 25 Pfennige. This would have increased the cost by 13.5% to 37% depending on the initial ticket price.
37. 'Many film enthusiasts have been turned back after waiting in line, arriving at the ticket booth only to discover that all the seats have been sold out. This must change!', *Metzer Zeitung am Abend*, 3 novembre 1943.
38. *Metzer Zeitung am Abend*, 3 novembre 1943.
39. AMM 2 Z 30, 'Abschluss – Bilanz 1943'.
40. The *Staatsauftragsfilme* were produced in Germany between 1933 and 1945 by order of the German Reich and entirely financed by it. The names of the ninety-six films can be found in the book: *Catalogue of Forbidden German Feature and Short Film Productions held in Zonal Film Archives of Film Section, Information Services Division, Control Commission for Germany* (1996). London: Flicks Books.
41. A similar weak reaction to *Ohm Krüger* can be observed in annexed Luxembourg, despite a comparably extensive promotional campaign there as well. According to Paul Lesch, the German authorities hoped to use *Ohm Krüger* to counter the pro-British feelings of the local population. In an admission of failure, the *Sicherheitsdienst* (Security Service of the Reichsführer-SS, SD) stated that it must be accepted that the Luxembourgers have 'their own opinion' about films. Lesch, P. (2002) *Heim Ins Ufa-Reich?: NS-Filmpolitik und die Rezeption deutscher Filme in Luxemburg, 1933–1944.* Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, pp. 84–86.
42. AMM 2 Z 30, 'Abschluss – Bilanz 1943'.
43. (1945) *Zahlen Zur Deutschen Filmwirtschaft 1939–1944*, Berlin, Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung, « Tabelle 46 ». Nevertheless, the occupancy rates of the *Lothringer Lichtspieltheater* cinemas located in cities without a garrison were comparable to those seen in Metz, which would indicate that the local success of cinemas could not be just explained by the mere presence of soldiers in the territory.

44. Cadars, F. & P. Courtade (1972) *Le Cinéma Nazi*. Paris: Eric Losfeld, p. 215.
45. In the summer of 1942, Josef Bürckel decided to grant German nationality to all Mosellans. Consequently, young adults had the obligation of military service in the German army and 30,000 of them, born between 1920 and 1927, were forced to join the army. This situation caused a lot of trouble in Moselle and with the French government. These conscripts were called 'Malgré-Nous' (against our will), and about 10,000 of them died on the eastern front or in Russian prisoner of war camps. See Hiegel, H. (1981) *L'enrôlement des Mosellans dans le R.A.D. et la Wehrmacht de 1940 à 1945*. Metz: Académie nationale de Metz. pp. 75–89.

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[1] Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to notes.

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